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# DISCIPLINE

AND

# ORDER

Of Particular

# CHURCHES,

NO

# NOVELTY.

Proved from Scripture, Reason, Antiquity, and the most Eminent Modern DIVINES.

OR,

A Discourse of the Church, in a Scripture Notion, with her Extent, Power and Practice, tending to Moderate the Minds of Men, toward Dissenters in Matters Ecclesiastical, and to acquit such from the Charge of Innovation, Faction, Separation, Schism, and Breach of Union and Peace in the Church, who cannot conform in many things to the Rules, Canons, and Practices of others.

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By a Lover of Truth, Peace, Unity, and Order.

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London, Printed Anno Domini, M. DC. LXXV.

1607/5758







THE  
DISCIPLINE  
AND  
ORDER  
OF  
Particular CHURCHES  
no Novelty, &c.

**T**H E Church of God, since the days of the Gospel, was, and is (according to Scripture-expressions) either, first, the whole Body of Christ, consisting of all the Elect, as Eph. 5.23. *Christ the head of the Church, the Saviour of the Body*, ver. 27. *That he might present to himself a Glorious Church*, ver. 25. *Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it*. So Heb. 12.22,23. *To the General Assembly and Church of the First born written in Heaven*, &c. Col. 1. 18. *He is the Head of the Body, the Church*, &c. Dr. Carleton, sometime Bishop of Chichester, in his little Piece, Called, *A Direction to know the true Church*, p.3. saith, That the Saints before the Law, under the Law, and under Grace, make up the Body of Christ, or Members of the Church; and that this is the Catholick Church.

See the  
disputati-  
on against  
Campion  
at the  
Tower,  
Ser. 18.  
1581. in  
the Morn.  
by Tulk.  
and Goad.

Or, Secondly, the Universal Visible Church, or whole Visible Body of Believers upon the whole Earth, at the same time, as *Acts* 2, 42. *The Lord added to the Church daily, &c.* So *Eph.* 3. 21. *Unto him be Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all Ages.* — Or,

Mr. Baxter  
Cure of  
Church-  
Divisions.  
p. 82.  
Hooker  
Eccl. Po-  
lity, third  
Book, p. 88.

Thirdly, a particular Congregation, Society, or Company of Professors of the Faith of Jesus Christ, usually meeting together in one place, as one Body, for the participation of the same Ordinances, and Exercising the same Duty, as a Church, in Edifying one another, Prayer, &c. Such as was the Church in *Jerusalem*, *Acts* 11. 22. *Tydings came to the Ears of the Church, which was in Jerusalem, and they sent forth Barnabas and others, &c.* That this was but one Congregation, is evident from *Act.* 15. where *Paul* and *Barnabas* and others coming from *Antioch* to this Church; they were received by the Church first, and then the Apostles and Elders. The Apostles, Elders, and Brethren, the whole Multitude were present at the Discourse of the Matter, and the Epistle wrote in the name of the whole, *Apostles, Elders, and Brethren met together with one accord*, ver. 25. Such was the Church of *Antioch* which was gathered together, *Acts* 14. 27. when *Paul* and *Barnabas* came, and with whom they had Assembled before a whole year, *Acts* 11. 26. And were afterwards gathered together to receive and hear the Epistle, *Acts* 15. 30. Such were the Churches which the Apostles visited, and ordained Elders in, *Acts* 14. 23. for they did it by suffrage. Likewise the Church in *Corinth*, *1 Cor.* 1, 2. *Unto the Church of God in Corinth: These met in one place, 1 Cor.* 5. *1 Cor.* 11. 18. 20. 23. *Cap.* 14. 23. So the Church at *Cenchrea*,  
near

Reynolds  
in his Con-  
ference  
with Hart,  
*Cap.* 6. p.  
218. saith,  
That a Bi-  
shop in our  
sence is  
him to  
whom the  
Over-sight  
and charge  
of a par-  
ticular  
Church is  
committed,  
such as  
*Ephesus*,  
*Philippi*,  
and the  
seven  
Churches.

near *Corinth*. And Mr. *Stillingfleet* quotes *Pareus* in *Rom.* 16. for this, that the Church of *Corinth* did meet sometimes at *Cenchrea*, because of the violence of their Enemies in *Corinth*. Therefore also when the Apostles spake any where of the Assemblies, or Societies of Believers in any one Country, they call them not a Church, in the singular Number or the Church of such a Country or Isle, but Churches, as of many in the same Country; as in *Judea*, *Macedonia*, *Galatia*, *Asia*, 1 *Thef.* 2. 14. 2 *Cor.* 8. 1. 18. 23, 24. *Gal.* 1. 2. 22. The Holy Ghost mentions seven Churches by name in *Asia*, *Rev.* 1. 4. Ch. 2. Ch. 3. --- And as to this, the same Bishop *Carleton*, in the same Book, p. 2. saith, That particular Churches are visible Assemblies, &c. and Governed by divers visible heads, and proves it by *Gregory*, *Lib.* 4. *Epist.* 3. ---

See  
Smeat. p.  
40, 41. 47  
58, 59.  
Bishop  
Jewels  
Reply to  
Harding.  
p. 230.

A fourth Church, in Scripture Phrase, cannot be found (since the time that all in every Nation which fear God are accepted, as the Apostle said, *Acts* 10. 34, 35.) Such as National, Provincial, Synodical, &c. We read not in Scripture, nor in any Church-History for many years after Christ, of any Church, distinct from these Descriptions before given.

Now, it is to be presumed, that there are none who will affirm, that the first of these three Churches could possibly meet together, or do any Act, as a Church, either in choosing Officers, determining Controversies, Ordering things indifferent to Edification, giving Interpretations of Scriptures, partaking of Ordinances, and casting out of Offenders, &c. Or that ever any such Power was derived down from Christ upon them, as a Church so to do; or that he ever intended this Church, when he

directs any thing to be done by the Church as such; because of the utter impossibility of their performance thereof, as a Church, part of which being already fallen asleep, and part not yet born.

Also it may be concluded, as to the second Church above described, that it is utterly impossible they should at any time meet together as a Church in one Body, to agree upon, consent unto, Act, or Order any thing (according to the power given to the Churches, as above) joyntly as such a Church; or partake of Ordinances joyntly as such. Nay, it's improbable, if not impossible, that in their Representative, this Church should meet, and put themselves into a capacity, to Act as a Church in any of the things to be done by a Church as such. Nay, was there ever any such meeting of this Church? None as can be found in Story. Or, if this were possible, where have we Authority of Scripture or Primitive Practice, to justify such a Company of Representatives, to call themselves a Church in this sense, and to take to themselves the Power of the whole Church given to her by Jesus Christ, and to call their Acts the Acts of the Church? And it would be strange for any to affirm, that Christ hath put the Power (as to the Execution of it) into the hands of a Body that can never possibly be able to Execute the Power derived upon.

If any number of Men would colourably make themselves the Churches Representative: It is necessary they should be chosen by the whole, and some one at least for every particular Church, Body, Society, or Congregation throughout the World; as the Messengers of the Churches were chosen by the Churches, or else how in any tolerable sense, can they be said to be the Church, in either of the two first Descriptions?

And

And then surely it will follow, That all the Power that by the Scripture is placed in the Church of God, as such, (as to the Execution thereof) is derived upon the particular Churches, Societies, or Congregations for the management of Church-matters within themselves, as to Meeting, the Ordering of Circumstances of Worship, casting out of Offenders, choosing Officers, Ordering things indifferent, &c. according to the Laws of Christ given us in Precept, or Example of Scripture, and practice of purest times; and the determination of these things is given to each Church, the same Power by the same Rule. The *Magdeburg Divines*, *Singula Cent. 2. Cap. 7. Col. 134, 135.* Says, That every Church hath a like Power of Teaching Gods Word, *Ecclesie parem habebant;* Administring Sacraments, Excommunicating and *&c.* absolving Sinners, of calling and choosing her Ministers, and for just cause again to depose them, to Exercise the Ceremonies received from the Apostles; and also (for the cause of Edification) appoint New ones, this they prove by many Authors. And Bishop *Jewel*, in his Epistle to the Council of *Trent*, agrees to this in these words; We know (saith he there) that the Spirit of God is not tyed to places, nor to numbers of Men; tell it to the Church, saith Christ; not to the whole Church spread over the whole Earth (saith the Bishop) but to a particular Church, which may easily meet in one place. *Wheresoever* (saith Christ) *two or three are gathered together in my Name, there I am in the midst of them.* When *Paul* (saith the Bishop) would Reform the Church of *Corinth* and the *Galatians*, he did not command them to expect a general Council, but only wrote to them, That what error soever, or Vice was amongst them,

*Mr. Vines*  
upon the  
Sacra-  
ment, p.  
166.  
agrees  
this.



themselves should presently cut it off. *Hist. Concil. Trident.* p. 860. *English Translation.* And in the same Council it was alledged against Episcopal Assemblies, out of *Gregory Nazianz.* That Contention hath been always increased by Episcopal Assemblies. The same *Hist. Lib. 7. p. 706.*

See Justice Hubbard in the Case between Colt. and the Bish. of Coventry and Litchfield.

That these particular Churches or Societies were made up of Professing Believers, Voluntarily joyning themselves together, and that it was each Believers Liberty to joyn himself to what Society, Church, or Number of Christians he pleased, or was most convenient for him: And that it was the Churches power to admit such who desired so to joyn unto them: And that this Liberty continued to particular Churches and Christians many hundred years, we think none can deny; if they do, let them shew a President Authoritative against it. Thus it was in the beginning; *The Disciples were all together in Solomons Porch, and if the rest durst no man to joyn himself to them, but the People magnified them,* Acts 5. 12, 13. So Acts 9. 26. *Saul assayed to joyn himself with the Church in Jerusalem, who being satisfied about him, received him.* Nothing of any Law of God, or the Church in those days, nor in some Ages after, to confine Men to joyn themselves to, or continue with this or that particular Church or Society, or to this or that Church so and so formed and Governed. No, nor can we find any such Law made by any of the first Christian Emperors, but still left free. It was thus alledged at the Council of *Trent*, That the Division of Parishes was first made by the People, when a certain number of inhabitants, having received the Faith, built a Temple for the Exercise of their Religion, hired a Priest, and did constitute a Church; which



which by the Neighbours was called a Parish; and when the Numbers were increased, if one Church and Priest were not sufficient, those who were most remote did build a Church beside, and fit themselves better. *Hist. Conc. Trident. Lib. 6. p. 498.*

And Mr. *Stillingfleet*, in his *Irenicum* affirms, That Men are not bound by the Law of Nature to associate themselves with any but whom they shall think fit: And that every one entring into a Society, should consent and submit unto the Rules of it; which (saith he) at mens first entring into the Society of a Church, was requisite to be done by the expresse and explicate consent of the parties themselves, being capable, &c. And for Children, he saith, That it is highly rational, that when they come to Age, they should explicitly declare their own voluntary consent to submit to the Laws of Christ, and conform themselves to the Profession of Christianity; which, saith he, might be a probable way, and certainly most agreeable both to Reason and Scripture, to advance the Credit of Christianity once more in the World, &c. That one great cause of the flourishing of Religion in the Primitive times, was certainly the strictness used by them in their admission of Members into their Church-Societies. These are Mr. *Stillingfleets* own words, see them in p. 132. 134. And as to the Churches admittance of Members, and of such as joyn themselves; the same *Stillingfleet* saith, in the same Book, p. 134, 135. That none were admitted but such, into whose Lives and Carriages they had enquired, to discern their seriousness in their professions of Christianity, and find true Repentance and Reformation of Life, a profession of Faith, and answerable Life to the Gospel, without which it was not

Mr. Vines  
upon the  
Sacra-  
ment.  
J. 322, 323  
324.

not Lawful to admit them; and this he proves there by *Origen*, *Justin Martyr*, &c. And as to an explicit Covenant, by such, he saith, That if by an Explicit Covenant be meant a real confederation between those who joyn themselves together in Gospel-Ordinances in Order to their being a Church, he knoweth none will question it, that knoweth what it is that maketh a Society to be so, which is such a real confederation with one another. Again, That though every Christian be bound to joyn with some Society, or Church, yet not being determined by Scripture to what particular Church they should joyn; therefore, saith he, (for Christians better understanding what their mutual Duty is one to another, who is their Pastor, to whom they owe the Relation of Members) That there should be some significant Declaration either by their Words or Actions of their willingness to joyn with such a particular Society in Gospel-Ordinances: This he grants to be necessary too. And further, That when Churches are over-run with Looseness, Ignorance, and Prophaneness; this is useful, saith he, if not necessary. Yea, that at all times it seems the most likely way to advance the Practice, Power, and Purity of Religion. See it more at large, p. 138.

140.

If it be Objected, That though the Law of God or Nature hath not, yet that there are Laws of Men that do determine the Matter as to the particular Churches, to which every Member must joyn himself (to wit) to the Parish wherein each Member resides for the time being; and also, as to the manner of joyning and being admitted, (that is) by their being Parishioners.

To say nothing of the Irrationalness of this way, Po  
in

the Apprehension of such who consider, what it is that makes a Society to be so, and any one to become a Member thereof; or of such, who know what it is to have Communion in Christian Societies as such.

We Answer, First, That there were no such Laws made by the first Christian Emperors against Christian Liberty in this case.

Secondly, If any were made since, it is reasonable to enquire, how such, who made those Laws, had this Authority derived upon them from God in such cases? If it cannot be shewed (as we think it cannot be) then the Freedom continues still to Christians.

It is wonderful that Men, yea, Christians, should think it most just to preserve Mens Liberty of Living where they please, and to remove from one place to another, to choose what Society they please in Civil things; And yet restrain Mens Liberty in this case, as if Soul-health, Liberty, Comfort, and Profit, is not to be preserved above that of the Body: Especially since the Law of Nature, and the Law of God hath left it free.

Thirdly, That Law which makes all Persons indefinitely Living, or that shall Live in such a Precinct to be a Church, and Members one of another in a particular Society, and puts them under a necessity of joyning together, as one Body, in the Matters of God, can very hardly be defended from oppugning the Laws of Christ, which forbids Fellowship in such things, with such and such Persons, many of which may be found in every Parish amongst us.

But to prove by some particulars now, That the Power in Church-Affairs, was for some Ages Exercised

exercised in and by these particular Churches, and no  
 else-where, without any Interruption or Controul  
 considerable ; And without any additional or Su-  
 perior Authority, after the Apostles days. And  
 first, as to the choosing of their Ministers, *Acts 6*  
*2, 3. 5, 6.* The whole Church there, the Multi-  
 tude, by the Apostles own Direction, did choose  
 their Deacons, and were Judges of their Qualifi-  
 cations. The Apostles told them what the Deacon  
 should be, the Multitude were Judges whether they  
 were such. For, the same seven ( without Exa-  
 mination or Exception ) which they chose, were by  
 the Apostles set apart for the work : The Apostles  
 being then the only Officers of that Church, which  
 was then but one Society or Congregation. So for  
 the Elders or Bishops, *Acts 14. 22, 23.* Paul and  
*Barnabas* ordained ( or appointed ) them Elders  
 in every Church ; but for the manner ; it was by  
 suffrage ( *i. e.* ) by the Peoples choice or Vote :  
 thus the very Text is rendred in some Translations ;  
 and so by *Magdeburg Divines* Translated : They  
 created Presbiters in every Church by suffrage.  
*Cent. 1. Lib. 2. Cap. 4. Col. 401, 402.* and this  
 could not be but in particular Congregations, who  
 could meet together to this end. The Apostles car-  
 ried no Men with them, but passing from Church to  
 Church, they appointed such of every Church whom  
 they found there ; and who were more capable of  
 Judging, than the Church of which they were Mem-  
 bers ; and who had experience of, and acquaintance  
 with them.

That this was so, is yet more evident by this,  
 That afterwards for many hundred years together,  
 this way only was continued in the Churches ; for  
 the Congregations or particular Churches, to choose  
 their

Bilh. N.  
*choison*  
 Vindica-  
 tion of the  
 Church of  
*England,*  
 p. 26.  
 agrees this  
 of Deacons.

*Lorinus*  
*Salmeron,*  
*& Gasper.*  
*Sanctus*  
 upon *Act.*  
*14. 23.*  
*Deer. Part*  
*1. dist 63.*  
 See *As-*  
*sembly of*  
*Divines*  
 upon *Act.*  
*24. 23.*

their own Bishops and other Ministers, and they accounted it as their Right, without any controll ; as for instance, in *Euseb. Eccl. Hist. Lib. 3. Cap. 1. p. 44.* It is said, that after the death of *James*, the Apostles and Disciples of our Lord gathered themselves together to consult who should succeed, and they all with one voyce judged *Simon* worthy. So *Euseb. Lib. 6. Cap. 28. p. 110.* when all the Brethren of the Church of *Rome* had gathered themselves together for the Electing of a Bishop (their Bishop being dead) and many had thought upon Notable and Famous Men (*Fabianus* being present) the whole Multitude with one accord, and the same Spirit of God, agreed upon him, and made him Bishop.

The People of a Church in *Constantinople* (being by their Bishop before his Death desired to choose one of two Men, he named, because of their Vertues) did (after his Death) meet, and choose one of them. *Soc. Eccl. Hist. Lib. 2. Cap. 4. p. 253.* So did the People of a Church in *Millan*, being met together, with one voyce chose *Ambrose* to be their Bishop ; which the Emperour concludes there to be the work and will of God. *Socrat. Lib. 4. Cap. 25. p. 335.* There are such Multitudes of Presidents and Instances of this Practice, that it would be endless to mention them : Only see some Instances in the same Histories of *Socrates, Lib. 2. Cap. 9. p. 256. Lib. 4. Cap. 13. p. 324. Lib. 6. Cap. 2. p. 359. Lib. 7. Cap. 7. p. 377, 378. Lib. 7. Cap. 12. p. 380. Cap. 26. p. 390. Evagr. Eccl. Hist. Lib. 4. Cap. 6. p. 473. Lib. 2. Cap. 11. p. 436.*

This continued unquestioned 500 Years at least. And though attempts were sometimes made by Bishops,



Bishops, and the Civil Powers, they engaged to depose Ministers, and thrust in others upon Churches; yet still the Churches refused them, and chose others themselves, when they wanted them, as *Soc. Lib. 2. cap. 6. p. 254* One *Emiseus* there refused at two several places by the People, at *Alexandria* and *Emisa*. So likewise *Socrat. Lib. 4. cap. 7. p. 318, 319.* when one *Eunomius* was sent to *Cizicum* by a Bishop of *Constantinople*, and commanded to be placed there by the Emperour yet was he refused, and *Eunomius* went and lived with him that made him Bishop. So again, *Socrat. Lib. 7. cap. 12. p. 380.* One *Salvatus* rejected by a Church in *Constantinople*. So again, at *Cizicum*, where a Bishop at *Constantinople* appointed *Proclus* to be their Bishop. The Church at *Cizicum* understanding what was done, prevented it, and chose *Dalmatius*, a Religious Man, to Govern and *Proclus* being not admitted there, spent his time at *Constantinople*. *Socrat. Lib. 7. cap. 28. p. 391.* and many more Instances of this Nature might be given.

Yet we find no complaint made thereof, as any irregular Act of the People, which doubtless would have been, had it not been their known right: *Cyprian* agrees to this, that if any were intruded upon the People, he was taken for a false Bishop, not a true Pastor, for which he is quoted by the *Magdeburg Divines, Cent. 3. cap. 7. col. 175, 176.* Moreover, the Emperour *Constantine* acknowledged this right to be Lodged in these particular Churches: See his Epistle to the Church in *Antioch*, where he tells this Church in general, that they did affect *Eusebius*, and would have Elected him to be their Bishop, and then he perswades them to choose



choose another, seeing all did not agree, therefore  
 saith he, not Lawful; because, saith he, he that is  
 Elected to a Bishoprick by the general Suffrage of  
 Wise men assembled to deliberate thereof, ought by  
 Gods Law to enjoy it. This is Recorded in *Euse-  
 bins*, of the Life of *Constantine*, *Lib. 3. cap. 58.*  
*p. 52.* Yea, the great *Nicene* Councel agree it in  
 these words, expressed in *Socrat. Lib. 1. cap. 6.*  
*p. 225.* (Speaking about some who might be in a  
 Capacity of being made Ministers) they say, if  
 they be found worthy, and the People choose them,  
 they may Succeed the Deceased, &c. Yet fur-  
 ther it's manifest by the same History, That where  
 any one Congregation did divide into two Bodies,  
 each apart chose their own Bishops for themselves,  
 as in the Case of the Church of *Antioch*, *Socrat.*  
*Lib. 5. Cap. 9. p. 341. Lib. 4. cap. 1. p. 316.*  
 So in many other Cases, when those of the true  
 Faith had Bishops imposed upon them by the *Arri-  
 ans*, they divided themselves from the *Arrians*, and  
 chose to themselves Bishops, and Assembled alone.

And it is observable, That all these Bishops thus  
 chosen and appointed of the People of these particu-  
 lar Churches, were still acknowledged as Lawful  
 Bishops by all; and in all the Councils mentioned  
 in those Histories. Nor do we find the least Ob-  
 jection any where Recorded in those days against  
 such, who came thus to this Office, as being un-  
 lawfully called.

To this Practice of the particular Churches, and  
 their Right thereto, the Fathers give in their Testi-  
 monies also; a touch of them therefore. *Tertul.*  
*in his Apol. to the Gent. Cap. 39. p. 137. English*  
*Translation*, saith, That in these Assemblies there  
 are Bishops that preside, they are approved of by  
 the

the Suffrage of them whom they ought to conduct. So saith many others, quoted by the *Magdeburg Divines*, Cent. 2. cap. 7. col. 134, 135. Cent. 1. Lib. 1. cap. 4. col. 179. Cent. 3. cap. 6. col. 146, 147.

*Possidon.*  
*in vita*  
*Aug. Cap.*  
*4. Leo. 1.*  
*Epist. 95.*

*Cyprian.*  
*Lib. 1.*  
*Epist. 4.*  
*Aug. Epist.*  
*100. Cy-*  
*prian.*  
*Epist. 68.*

The *Roman Presbiters*, in their Epistle to *Cyrian*, affirm, that every Church hath a like Power of Choosing, Calling, and Ordaining Ministers, and for just cause again to depose them. And *Cyprian* himself saith, That the right of choosing such as are fit, and refusing the unworthy, belong to the People and whole Church, and that by Divine Authority. And that the Officers and People did consult about it with common consent. And for these things he is quoted by the *Magdeburg Writers*, Cent. 3. cap. 7. col. 153, 173, 174, 175. Cap. 6. col. 135, 136, 146. and also that the People did consider the Life and Manners of the Persons to be chosen, and judge; and much more to this purpose in those places before, and *Magdeburg. Cent. 5. cap. 6. col. 178, 179, 180.*

*John Ferus*  
*a Fryer, in*  
*his Com-*  
*ment upon*  
*Act. 11.*

Now we shall add a few Testimonies and Judgments of latter Ages, and of Men otherwise differing.

The Papists themselves, at the Council of *Trent*, acknowledged, that this was the usual Practice of the Church of God for 800 Years together after Christ, for the particular Churches to choose their own Ministers; and they then affirmed, that there were remaining at that day the Records thereof at *Rome*: and they then and there desired, that those Records might be destroyed, lest *Luther* (who maintained this Right to the People) should make use of them to bring in the Custom into the Church again. And they there also acknowledge, that this

was

was taken from the Church by the Authority of a Council only who made a Decree against it. *Concil.*

*Trident. in English, Lib. 7. p. 590, 591. 598.*

See more of the same Council, *Lib. 8. p. 725.*

And he that wrote this History complains against

*Rome* about this, in these words: The Church of

*Rome* grant not the People the Election of their Mi-

nisters, which certainly, saith he, was an Aposto-

lical Institution, continued more than 800 Years.

*Concil. Trident. Lib. 2. p. 163.*

Bishop Jewel, in his Reply to Mr. *Harding*, p.

230. Saith, out of *Cyprian, Lib. 1. Epist. 4.* That

the Bishoprick was bestowed upon *Sabinus*, by the

consent and voices of the whole Brother-hood of

that Church to which he was to be Bishop: He there

saith, that *Honorius* the Emperour Writing to *Bo-*

*neface*, doth agree him to be Bishop, whom some

of the Clergy, and whole Brother-hood shall choose.

And the Bishop himself then there affirms from

hence, that every particular Church is called the

whole Church. And after, in p. 282. The Bishop

affirms, that *Cyprian*, in the same place, saith, That

the People being Obedient to Gods Law, have

Power, especially to choose worthy, or refuse un-

worthy Priests.

Mr. *Stillingsfleet*, in his *Irenicum*, p. 306. quotes

*Tertul. Exhort. Castil. c. 7.* - for these words,

That all the difference between the Ministers and

People, comes from the Churches Authority; and

again, p. 416. himself saith, That Episcopal men

will hardly find any evidence in Scripture,

or the Practice of the Apostles, for Churches

consisting of many fixed Congregations for Wor-

ship, under the Charge of one man; nor in the

Primitive Church for the Ordination of Bishops

See the  
Confe-  
rence of  
Rayno's & 82  
Hart, c. 6.  
p. 223.  
Hart saith  
out of  
Genebrard,  
that Cle-  
mens took  
not the Bi-  
shoprick  
by the  
Council  
of the  
Lord, least  
the Exam-  
ple of ra-  
king it by  
nomi-nati-  
on of Peter  
should  
pass to po-  
sterity,  
and de-ro-  
gate from  
the free  
provi-  
dence of  
the Church  
in choos-  
ing of her  
own Bi-  
shop Gene-  
brard  
Chronolg.  
l. 3. in Lin.  
See more  
l. 4. Seculo.  
11. Cited  
in the  
same Con-  
fer. Cap.  
7. l. 276.

without the preceding Election of the Clergy, and at least, consent, and approbation of the People; so much he allows there, and something more in p. 339. where he useth these words, (speaking of Elders) now the voyce of the People, which was used in the Primitive times, is grown out of use, &c. by which he confesseth it to be the Primitive Practice. But Mr. *Stillingfleet* having (as he saith) been at the pains to transcribe some of Bishop *Cranmer's* words, they will serve well here, and we shall again transcribe so much of them as speaks to this particular. See them in the same *Irenicum*, p. 391, 392. They are these. That in the Apostles time, when there were no Christian Princes, by whose Authority Ministers of Gods Word might be appointed, nor sins be corrected by the Sword; there was no Remedy then for correction of Vice, or appointment of Ministers, but only the consent of Christian Multitude amongst themselves by an uniform consent to follow the Advice and perswasion of such Persons whom God had most endued with the Spirit of Wisdom and Counsel, &c. Sometimes the Apostles, and others unto, whom God had given abundance of his Spirit, sent, or appointed Ministers of Gods Word; sometimes the People did choose such as they thought meet thereunto: and when any were sent by the Apostles, or other, the People, of their own voluntary will, with thanks did accept of them, not for the Supremacy Imperial Dominion that the Apostles had over them to command, as their Princes or Masters, but as good People, ready to Obey the good Councillors, and to accept any thing necessary for their Edification and Benefit. And again, that the People before Christian Princes were, commonly did Elect their

their Bishops and Priests; thus far of Bishop *Cranmer*: which words of his (as Mr. *Stillingfleet* there affirms) he put his own Hand to, and gave it in, in answer to certain Questions put to him in King *Edward* the Sixths Time, and now remain upon Record.

Bishop *Nicholson*, of *Gloucester*, in his Vindication of the Church of *England*, p. 27. grants the Truth of this. That the People did choose their Pastors in the Primitive Ages of the Church, in expresse terms, and saith, it was taken away from the People by Christian Princes, when the Fathers disliked the use. So far of him in this place.

*Polanus*, in his *Sintagma*, Lib. 7. Cap. 15. fully proves, and affirms, this Right to be Lodged in these Churches.--- Under this Head, *De Electionibus seu vocationibus Ecclesiasticis*.

First, he saith, That the Liberty, or Power of Election, calling or sending of Ecclesiastical Persons, is a Right, which the whole Church hath in choosing, and calling to themselves approved and fit Ministers, and in placing them into Sacred Order, p. 542. After in his next p. 543. under this Question; *a quibus Electio seu vocatio Ministrorum Ecclesie fieri debeat?* By whom the Election, or calling of Ministers of the Church ought to be made? He saith, That unto the Legitimate (or Lawful Election of the Ministers of the Church, especially of the Pastors,) is requisite, a free and ingenious consent, and Suffrage of the whole Church (whose business it is) that is of the Elders and Flock. The which consent must not be had by intreaty, or sold for a price, much less forced and extorted; so that it is the part of the whole Church, to choose Ministers for themselves: And there he gives these



following arguments to evince it. First, because even in the time of the Apostles, the whole Church (whose business it was) did choose Ministers for themselves (or to it self.) Neither did the Apostles themselves, saith he, Ordain any one for Ecclesiastical charges, only by their own Authority, but always by the Church consenting and approving, *Acts* 6. 2, &c. and 14. 23. Secondly, because by this means the Churches own Liberty, which Christ hath given to it, is kept. For a Pastor, or Minister of the Word of God is not to be obtruded upon the Church of God against his will. *Can. Null. inquit distinc. 61.* Thirdly, because it serves to this, That even the Ministers may, with a good Conscience, Rule the Lords Flock, by whom he is Elected; and the Flock of the Lord may in like manner yield themselves the more easie to him to be Instructed and fed, than to him, who, beside (or against) their will, is thrust upon them: and again, he is not to be acknowledged for a Lawful Pastor of the Church, who hath been intruded on the Church by the Authority and Command of the Prince. *Quod testatur Concil. Parisiense primum. Can. Octavo Tomo Secundo Concil.* And after he saith, in the same p. That fit Persons are to be nominated and presented to the People before the Election, and should be openly proposed in the Assemblies. And again, in p. 544. Under this Question, *Qualiter seu quomodo Ministri Ecclesiae Eligi & vocari debeant?* How the Ministers of the Church ought to be chosen and called, *Acts* 14. 23. Those Persons are to be Nominated, of whom the Election and Calling ought to be made, to this end, that the Church by the free Suffrage of the whole Congregation (or such to whom



whom she hath committed a Right and Power of choosing) may approve and accept of one of them.

That the Suffrages are collected by some Pastor of the Church, or of another to whom he shall commit it. And they are given, either in Order by every Elector, *Vivâ voce*, or joyntly of all or many, by lifting up of hands, or either way, &c. For, if by giving their Suffrages, *Vivâ voce*, there were variance, and they go into many Sentences of unprofitable and tedious prolixity, Those who had any Votes for Ordination were again named; and every one being named, they who chose him were commanded to lift up their Hands. At the Nomination of whom, either all or many lifted up their Hands; this Man was concluded to be Lawfully Elected. After this manner, saith he, *Paul* and *Barnabas* did Create Elders, *Acts* 14. 23.

And after, under this Question, By what Rite or Ceremony? &c. he saith, He who was Elected by the Church with free Suffrages, at length received Ordination of the Pastors of the Church, *1 Tim.* 4. 14. & 5. 22. the whole Multitude of the Church being present. Then *Polanus* concludes with these words. They do therefore grievously sin who do manifestly drive away the Ecclesiastical People or Flock from the Election of their Ministers; which, saith he, the false, or Counterfeit Popish Bishops do; yea, they do grievously sin, who do impose Bishops and Pastors upon the Church against their will. Thus far *Polanus* agrees in his own words.

From some of the former Authorities, The *African Synod*, *Athanasius*, *Cornelius*, and others. The Presbyterian Divines, in their Book, called,

*Smellinnius*, admits this power to reside in the People of particular Churches, and that by Divine Authority. They say,

First, That the especial power of Judging of the Worthiness, or Unworthiness lay in the People.

Secondly, That the power of choosing, or refusing them upon this Judgment, resided in the People.

Thirdly, That the power descended upon them by Divine Authority. *Athanasius*, say they, in his *Epist. ad Orthodoxos*, blamed the Intrusion of Bishops as against the Apostolical Precepts, against the Canon, and compelled the Heathen to Blaspheme.

Mr. *Prin*, in his Book of un-bishoping *Timothy* and *Titus*, p. 69. affirms this out of *Alcuvinus de Diviniis Officiis*, Cap. 37. That Ministers of all sorts were made to the Year 800 by this Election of Clergy and People, and that they were all present at their Ordination, and consented to it. Also he affirms, in p. 72, 73. That *Martin Bucer*, in his Book of recalling, and bringing in again the use of Lawful Ordination, saith, That this power is in the People. Much more might be produced, to prove this particular, See only *Magdeb. Cent. 4. cap. 6. col. 43. Concil. Trident. in English, Lib. 8. p. 725. Lib. 7. p. 591. 598. Lib. 6. p. 404, 405*. And as to imposition of Hands, upon these thus chosen, Mr. *Prin*, in the same Book, p. 72, 73. quotes *Ferome Epist. to Evagr.* and his Comment upon *Titus*, for this; That the Ancient Consecration of Bishops was nothing else but their Election, &c. And that all the Rites and Ceremonies now used are but Novelties. And *Martin Bucer*, for these conclusions, in his afore-said Book, and in his *Scripta Anglicana*, of the Office of Pastor, p. 154. 159.

191. and on *Mat. 16.* That imposition of hands, on those chosen Ministers belong to the Presbiters, but that this they have not Originally, but only Instrumentally, as Servants to the whole Congregation. And that this ought to be done publicly in the Church, where they are Elected before all the Congregation : and that the imposition of hands is no essential part of Ordination, but that it may be omitted. And that those who are Elected, and Lawfully called to the Ministry by the Suffrage of the whole Church and People, are Ministers Lawfully called and Ordained without this Ceremony.

Luther held this  
Concil  
Trident  
l.7.p.590.

And Mr. *Prin* there further proves this by *David Blond. Apol. Sect. 3. de Ordinatione & plebis in Electionibus jure*, from p. 309. to 448. He also affirms, p. 81. That *Morney, Amesius*, and sundry others there quoted, say, That the People alone, in case of Necessity, where are no Bishops or Ministers, or where Bishops refuse to ordain as they ought, may Elect and Ordain Ministers. The right of Ordination and Election being Originally in the whole Church and people, &c. and that imposition of hands is no Essential, but Ceremonial part of Ordination, as *Angelus de Clavafo, Peter Martyr*, and others, both *Papists* and *Protestants* affirm.

Morney  
Lord of  
Pleiss in  
his Book  
de Ecclesia,  
cap. 11.

Mr. *Stillingfleet*, in his *Irenicum*, p. 392. where he transcribes Bishop *Cranmers* answer to the Questions before mentioned, hath set down these words amongst others, as the Bishops own words. The Bishop having affirmed, that the people before Christian Princes, did commonly Elect their Bishops and Priests, saith further, That in the New-Testament, he that is appointed to be Priest or Bishop needed no Consecration, for Election, or appointment thereto (saith he) is sufficient.

Mr. Baxter  
body  
of Divinity,  
of Ordination,  
p. 79.

Now, having so great a cloud of witnesses beyond all exception, and a concurrent sentence in this matter, by Persons at so great a distance each from other in their Judgment, in other things, and living in several ages of the World: It seemeth strange, that there should be such wrestling against the common right of the Church of God; and such a stir to make that Scripture, *Acts* 14.23. to speak something else, than that, which so many Learned, eminent, Godly Men agree it doth, and the practice of the Church so long and universally and fully affirm it to do. Much more strange it is, that men should be blamed for being of this Judgment, and practising accordingly, having so much ground to believe it to be the truth.

If any should pretend, that there are other Officers in the Church of God besides Ordinary Bishops and Deacons, by Divine Right to continue. Let such prove it, if they can. But it seems clear that after Prophets, Apostles, and Evangelists, these extraordinary Officers of Christ, were deceased (who while they continued, had extraordinary Furniture given them from Christ, for their work.) These of Bishops or Elders, and Deacons, in the particular Churches, were all ~~one~~ no superior and General Officers over many, as Mr. *Stillingfleet*, in his afore-said *Irenicum*, p. 416. saith, that the Episcopal Men will hardly find any evidence in Scripture, or the Apostles practice, for Churches consisting of many fixed Congregations for the Worship of God, under the charge of one person.

First, it is manifest, that Bishops and Elders in those days were the same Officers, and not one above the other, *Acts* 20. where the Apostles sent

Hooker in his Eccles. Policy. 4<sup>th</sup> Book, p. 417, 418, &c. allows Presbyter and Deacons to be the Clergy, and that nowhere in the New Test. are they called Priests, nor will he contend for that Name. See more, p. 123, of the same Book.

at for the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus*, and  
 viving Discoursed with them, he gave them  
 charge, that they, the same Persons, should take  
 ed to the Flock over which the Holy Ghost had  
 ade them Bishops (or Overseers, as our Tran-  
 tion hath it.) So when *Peter* writes, 1 *Epist.* 5.  
 2, &c. He there calls the Ruling Officers in  
 eneral, Elders: whether Ruling only, or Ruling  
 and Teaching Elders. See 1 *Tim.* 5. 17.

Bishop *Cranmer*, in the place before quoted by  
 Mr. *Stillingfleet*, in his *Irenicum*, p. 392. saith,  
 hat the Bishop and Priest were at one time, and  
 ot two things, but both one Office in the begin-  
 ng of Christs Religion.

Dr. *Fulk*, againit the *Rhem.* upon *Titus* 1. 5.  
 and *Jerome*, in his Comment upon *Titus*, affirms  
 his.

And the *Magdeburg* Divines quote *Jerome*, *Am-  
 rose*, and *Chrysostome*, for the proof of this; and  
 also for shewing how in after Ages one Elder was  
 exalted above the rest, and then called the Bishop  
 y way of Eminence, and that this was by Humane  
 uthority. *Cent.* 2. *Cap.* 7. *col.* 126. *Cent.* 4.  
*cap.* 6. *col.* 491. *Cent.* 5. *cap.* 7. *col.* 737. Nay,  
*Gregory Nazianzen* wisheth this Episcopal decree  
 abolished, and saith it is Tyrannical, *Orat.* 28. So  
 ad it proved in his days, as it seems.

Bishop *Jewel*, in his Reply to Mr. *Harding*, p.  
 22. 229. 250, 251, 252. alledgeth this out of *Je-  
 rome*, *Cyprian*, &c. That Bishops are greater than  
 priests, more of Custom than of Gods Ordinance;  
 hat the Power of all Priests by the Authority of  
 Gods Word, is one, and equal; and that it was  
 nly Policy that set one over many. And in p. 257.  
 oncludes against Papists in these words; If Christ  
 (saith

Doctor  
*Wright* in his  
 Answer to  
*Campion*  
 in his ten  
 Reasons  
 10. Vol.



See Smeat.  
p. 24. 26.  
Raynolds  
conference  
with Hart,  
cap. 8. p.  
461, 462.  
affirms  
this Policy  
to be the  
ground of  
raising one  
Elder a-  
bove o-  
thers, and  
so step by  
step to the  
Pope See  
also p. 540  
541.

(saith the Bishop) appointed not one Priest or another, how then is it likely he should appoint over all? And so Mr. *Stillingfleet*, in his aforesaid Book, p. 276, 277. 310, 311. proves this large; That Bishops and Presbiters were the same in Primitive times; and that *Arius* was not condemned for that Opinion, but for his separation from such who set up Bishops above other Priests and he quotes *Aug. Epist. 29.* for this. That the difference between Episcopacy and Presbitery, the one is greater than the other, arise only by the Custom of the Church attributing a Name of greater Honour to them.

Secondly, That Bishops, Elders, and Deacons were all the Officers Christ intended to have continued in the Church after the Apostles days, see clear in this; That when the Apostle wrote to the Church of the *Philippians*, he mentioned these only. *To the Bishops and Deacons, Phil. 1. 1.* And when the Holy Ghost mentions the Qualifications of Church-Officers, he names none but these. Neither doth he seem to intend any other, nor any other recorded in the Scripture of the New Testament, which doubtless would have been, if Christ had intended any other to have been continued in the Church, for it would have been necessary to have known how such should have been Qualified as well as these. But of these two see at large 1 *Thim. 3. Titus c. 3.* And that these were all in the Primitive Churches, the *Century Writers* affirm, *Magdalen Cent. 1. Lib. 2. cap. 7. col. 508, 509. Cent. 2. cap. 7. col. 125.* This also may we note; That after the Church had departed from the Apostolic Order, and by humane prudence appointed one Elder or Bishop in every Congregation or Society



the first step, and after in a larger Circuit) to give the rest. Yet even these Bishops were then in the same manner chosen by the Body of those Churches where in he was to be Bishop, as the Authorities herein before alledged fully prove.

But now, if it shall be Objected (as some have been inclined to do) That this power of Election in the Church was not a Priviledge belonging to them of Right, but of conveniency. Ere we give answer, we shall go over some such pretences as these.

First, the Papiſts. They at the Council of *Trent* Concil. Trid. lib. 7. p. 590. admitted this use to have been in the Primitive times of the Churches. But as to the Right, they say, That though the people did choose, yet it was by the tacit, or explicit consent of the Pope.

This conceit will easily fall, for in those days there was no such thing in Nature as a Pope, (if we mean by a Pope such a one, as is now at Rome with such Authority as he challengeth) therefore he could not by his consent bring it in; or had he been so, the Pope had erred, to have given consent to the Church, that she should have called her Ministers in another way than Christ had appointed, which Christ did not appoint this way. If Christ did appoint this way, then his consent was insignificant-ly mentioned in this case; unless they will say Christ himself appointed no way, but that he left all to the discretion of the Pope in this matter; which we think they will not affirm.

Again, Secondly, Bishop *Nicholson*, of *Gloucester*, in his Book before cited, p. 27. admits the Matter of Fact, that the people did choose; but, as to the Right, he saith, first, That it was after the Apostles days.

Although we see Arch-Bishop *Cranmer*, *Polanus*, the

the *Magdeburg* Divines, and many others of expresse contrary Judgment in the places before quoted, and agree, that this was in the Apostles days, and their own way in which they Ordained Elders in the Churches.

Secondly, he saith, That this was not a Privilege belonging to them of Right, but of Convenience, for which we have the Bishops own words, not the least proof offered; against which stream of other Learned and good mens judgment before cited generally run. And this also the Bishop himself, in the same place, in the very same words ingeniously adds, and affirms, That the choice of the People was derived from the Rule of Christian Equity and Society; and he there further joyns this excellent effect it had. That he it came to pass, that the People did quietly receive, willingly maintain, diligently hear, and heartily love their Pastors.

From whence we may conclude. That such, whom the Bishop there saith, took away Power from the Churches, were to be blamed, rashness at least: And that there is a loud call for restoring of this Convenience (if it be no more to the Churches, since it was derived from such excellent Rules, and hath such desirable effects. No such to be found following any other way, brought in, in the room thereof. And that it may of Divine Right, rather than of Convenience, brought in by mans Wisdom; for it is rare to find a Constitution of mans derived from such Principles, to have such Fruits, which do exceed for good the Constitutions of Christ himself.

Again, Thirdly, One more such pretence we find in Mr. *Stillingfleet*, in his afore-said Book, p. 2

no, (though he had before in the place herein  
 noted, allowed that the People did choose; yet  
 he)saith, It seems strangely improbable, that the  
 Apostles should put the choice at that time into the  
 hands of the People, and he makes this the only  
 ground of his conjecture. That there were none  
 men that were fitted for the work, but whom the  
 Apostles did lay their hands upon; by which, saith  
 he, the Holy Ghost fell upon them, whereby they  
 were fitted and qualified for the work: the people  
 (saith he) could no ways choose men for their  
 abilities, when their abilities were consequent to  
 their Ordination. These are his own words, as to  
 this matter. But his ground seems very feeble, for  
 the concluding of such an improbability: for we  
 must either take it for granted; or he must prove:  
 First, that the Holy Ghost fell on none but such on  
 whom the Apostles laid hands: Secondly, That the  
 Holy Ghost fell on no men till the Apostles had  
 laid hands upon them for the Ministry: Thirdly,  
 that when ever the Apostles laid hands on any, they  
 were by that imposition of Hands Ordained Mini-  
 sters. If this be not granted or proved, then there  
 might be many in every Church qualified with gifts  
 of the Holy Ghost, and fitted for the work; some  
 without laying on of hands, some by laying on of  
 hands of the Apostles, and yet not Ministers there-  
 of. Then these were fitted for the work, and these  
 might be chosen by the Church before Ordination.  
 But so it was; it's evident that the Holy Ghost fell  
 upon many without imposition of hands; that he  
 fell upon some by imposition of hands before they  
 were made Ministers: That all were not made Mi-  
 nisters on whom the Apostles laid hands, and who  
 received the Spirit. So that Multitudes were fitted  
 and

and qualified for the people to choose in every place almost. See *Acts 10.* *There were many heard Peter Preach, and while he was yet speaking, the Holy Ghost fell on them all, and they spake with Tongues;* here is no imposition of hands, nor setting apart for the Ministry, for they were not baptized, *ver. 47.* yet were these Persons qualified for the People to have chosen any man among them. Again, *Acts 8. 14, 15, 16, 17.* *There were many Men and Women at Samaria that believed, and the Apostles, at Jerusalem, hearing of it, sent unto them Peter and John, who prayed, and laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.* Yet sure Mr. *Stillingfleet* will not say these were made Ministers by this; however they were qualified thereby to have been chosen by the People.

Again, *Acts 19.* *Paul found certain Disciples at Ephesus, twelve in Number, of Men; he laid his hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost, and prophesied.* And there is no colour to say that they were Ordained Ministers thereby: So that, there were more Persons qualified for the work to be chosen by the people before Ordination.

Yea, what saith Mr. *Stillingfleet* to that place *Acts 6.* where the Apostles direct the Multitude to choose out from amongst themselves seven Men of honest report, and full of the Holy Ghost and Wisdom, whom the Apostles might appoint, &c. Now, had Mr. *Stillingfleet's* conceit been true, that the qualification was consequent of Ordination, had been in vain to have given such a direction to the people. But we see the people did find out amongst themselves seven such Men every way fitted to be Ordained Ministers.

There were many of the Brethren in that single congregation at *Corinth* abundantly qualified for work, as doth clearly appear in those Epistles; the rest of the Brethren were to covet such gifts and qualifications, though they might never be made Ministers; and so in several other Churches. I did not the Apostle to *Timothy* and *Titus*, set down what should be the qualifications of such who should be made Bishops and Deacons, with which they must be furnished before they were to be Ordained. Sure then it cannot be imagined, that they were such to be chosen until they were Ordained. By this time Mr. *Stillingfleets* strange probability may be removed, and if this be all ground he hath for it's improbability, he may conclude, with others, That the Apostles did put the Electing power into the hands of the People their days, and that Abilities were Antecedential, not Consequential of Ordination. It is wonderful that such a famous and Learned man, as Mr. *Stillingfleet* is, should (through a mistake against the Peoples right of Election) be so much mistaken. Indeed it is lamentable to see, how Protestants in general, when they write against the Papists, do assert the peoples power of choosing their Ministers by Divine right, as in many of the instances before. Yet at home amongst their brethren, they will not practice it, they will not suffer other to do it, they are perswaded it ought to be so: yea many contend against it, and make Lawes for another manner of making Ministers. In so doing they do a little advantage the Popish interest.

We



We have here purposely digressed, a little shew what poor devices there are to deceive people, that they may not think it their duty priviledge to choose their own Ministers, and such men might order this matter at their pleasure.

And now for answer to the objection it self, it needs no more to be said but this; That the Div right of the people in these Churches about this matter, is already proved by what hath been said. Unless better evidences can be shewed to the contrary, than any of the aforementioned suggestions and conceits or other thing we have seen or heard.

Or if it shall be objected further, that although it was so in the infancy of the Church (as some say) yet it may not be so now, and Decrees of Councils or of the Church (as some term it) and Laws of Magistrates have taken it away.

*Ans.* 1. The Churches were better able to determine of the mind of Christ then, than now, there were fewer occasions to turn her aside in those dayes in such matters; and we have no new revelation of the truth in this thing, more than they then had. They had more abundant of the spirit of God amongst them, than now amongst us: they had Apostles then living amongst them, and after that for some time, such as saw the Apostles and their practices in these things, and conversed with them about such matters. And sure while these lived were in the Church, she was most like to walk in the right rule, and so after ages judged. The Church is, had those men that then made up the Church been still living, they might have been said to have been in their infancy in those dayes, and now in age; but they being dead and new Church-men still arising, it may be said she is still in her infancy.

B. Jewel  
on Hag. 1.  
Hodie venenum,  
infunditur  
in Eccles.

And verily much more childish she is, than she was in those dayes. But the Church in Name, the Older she grew, the more she doted, and when all these antient lights went out, the more she stum-  
bled; like Israel of old when *Moses* had been gone out 40 dayes, they made them a Calf, and *Aaron* the High Priest was also in the folly: and the Elder that Church grew (when their Fathers, who had seen Gods wonders, were dead) the more blind and idolatrous they waxed. Therefore is it much safer to follow the footsteps of the Church in her infancy, than her Rules in her age: so far as is possible.

But 2dly. What warrant have we from Gods word to conclude, that the Church must walk by one Rule in her infancy, (or more properly, in the primitive Gospel dayes) and by another in her elder age? one under Heathen Magistrates, another under Christian? not the least word for it in Scripture that we can find; had it been necessary, or the mind of Christ, it should have been so, no doubt our Lord would have let us know his pleasure in this, and have left some Rules for it. And who will be so bold for the taking away such things from the Churches by humane Councils and Laws, which our Christ, as King and Lawgiver to his Church hath given unto them.

That in the ordinary meetings of these Churches, the matter of their worship and work, was only reading the Scriptures, expounding them, or teaching, exhorting, comforting one another, singing Psalmes, sometimes made by the holy brethren, breaking bread (or participation of the Lords Supper) prayer (as he who prayed was able,) giving to the poor, &c. as appears by these Scriptures, *Mat. 1. 14. 15. 16. 2. 41. 42. Act. 12. 5. 12. 1 Cor.*

*Joh. 14. 3.  
Judges 2.  
7. 8. &c.*

11. 20. 23, &c, *ch. 12. ch. 14. Act. 20. 7. 1 Thes.*  
*5. 11. 14. Heb. 10. 24. 25.* So it was after the  
 Apostles dayes, *Enseb. Hist. lib. 7. c. 17. p. 28. 29.*  
*Tertul. in his Apol. c. 39. p. 137. 139. 141, Engl.*  
*Transl. saith,* that here we pray to God, &c. read  
 the holy Scriptures according to the Condition  
 of the times, what serveth to the admonishing and  
 confirming of the faithful; we cease not saith he,  
 to confirm or discipline by the strength of precept,  
 we continually repeat here, we make exhortations  
 and threatings, they feast saith he, and before they  
 sit down, they pray; after they sing Psalmes or  
 Hymnes, every one composeth after the capacity of  
 his mind, and as it began with prayer, so it ended  
 &c. *Plinius secundus, Enseb. l. 3. c. 3. p. 53. lib.*  
*10 cap. 3. p. 184.* saith something of it. And *Ju-*  
*stinus* saith, that here the writings of the Prophets  
 and Apostles were read, then preaching to stir up  
 the people to imitate the things read, then all stood  
 up in prayer; then the Lord Supper, (prayer pre-  
 ceding;) then every one gave to the poor as he  
 would, for this he is quoted by the *Magdeburg Dis-*  
*putations, Cent. 2. c. 6. col. 114. 115.* And they also say  
 that *Nicephorus* and *Clement* write, that they had  
 here Psalmes composed by the faithful, *Cent. 2. c. 6.*  
*Col. 115. 116.* And for the manner, they further  
 in the same, *114. col.* say, that here they read the  
 Scriptures, as they could, and he that was chief  
 did preside, prayed and gave thanks as he was able  
 and so other things as above. And to this *Tertulian*  
 in his said *Apol. cap. 30. p. 119.* saith, that these  
 prayers no man did prescribe, or declare to the  
 what to say, because (saith he) it is our heart. We  
 prayed a Prayer conceived and produced, &c. and  
 it was decreed at the Council of *Carthage* again  
 read

reading of any thing but the Canonical Scripture, in these Churches, *Magdeburg. Cent. 4. c. 6. Col. 4. 12.* No other service or prescribed formes, or any reading of prayers, &c. once mentioned to be used in those dayes. It's true in process of time, step by step, forms of prayer and prescribed rules of worship crept in; or were thrust in upon the Churches, upon pretence at first, that by this, they might prevent the spreading of the *Arian* Heresie, which said they, men might vent in prayer if they had liberty to have prayed what they had pleased: therefore they agreed, that Ministers should make their own form, and pray no other: then after that, these forms should not be used till he had conferred with some of the able brethren of the Church whereof he was Minister: then, the next step was that this prayer must be approved of by a Council ere they might use them: again, that one and the same form should be used in several Churches, as it is at this day, all which, such as are acquainted with History, cannot deny. But from this we conclude, it was not so from the beginning: and it is evident also, that the power of managing of the worship of Gods appointment (according as we see it was in those dayes) belonged to the particular Congregations, and each did (as to the circumstances of these) as they judged most convenient, and tend most to edification, nor did any other in those days intermeddle with these matters but in their own Churches, nor did these Churches themselves ever add any thing to their worship, or prescribe any forms of prayer, or rules of worship to which they necessarily bound themselves, till this policy entered about the *Arians*, which never had any success to the end pretended. We see that they pray-

ed before, as they were able, and no man prescribed words, they read according to the condition of the times. The Pastor or Bishop exhorted to follow such things as were read, and he gave thanks as he was able: they sang Hymnes composed by Godly brethren, &c. nothing imposed upon them, nor did any then pretend authority over them to give rules to the Churches in those things.

That in those ordinary meetings of these Churches, the private brethren (who were able) did (without any allowance of any Church but the Congregation, whereof they were members) openly preach, exhort, admonish, and comfort one another mutually, see *Rom. 15. 14. 1 Cor. 12. ch. 14.* yea they might Covet gifts to this end, as the Apostle there directs the *Corinthians*: and it is said of them, *2 Cor. 8. 7.* That they abounded in utterance, and how could this be known or used if not in their Assemblies, see also *Colos. 3, 16. 1 Thes. 5.*

Jerom.  
upon 3d.  
Ticus.

11. *Heb. 3. 12. 13. cap 10. 24. 1 Pet. 4. 10. 11.* If it be said that these had extraordinary gifts, their practice therefore, is no rule. *Answ.* The Officers of Churches themselves in these dayes, have no such extraordinary gifts; and if the brethren now, have such ordinary gifts as the Officers have, as to the work (both being from God) ought not these brethren then, by the same rule to imploy their talents also in an orderly manner? (as the Apostles directed the use of extraordinary gifts amongst the *Corinthians*) for the Churches good; as believers of old did use their extraordinary gifts for the Churches good in those dayes; especially these gifts which are given chiefly for this end: that believers should employ them for the edifying of their brethren, whereas tongues were not given for that end, but for a sign



to the unbelievers, 1 Cor. 14. 22. This the brethren did ordinarily in the Primitive Churches, as the *Magdeburgh Divines* alleadge out of *Ambrose*, that in the time of the Apostles, in the first Church, it was granted to all men to preach and explain the Scriptures, *Cent. 4. c. 6 col. 491.* and *Fulk* against the *Rhem.* upon *Rom. 10.* allow this right, and urgeth this place of *Ambrose* and *Ruffinus* to prove it. And in the Churches afterwards, the brethren did the like *Justine* writes, that in his time, the gift of Prophefying did flourish in the Church, *Euseb. l. 4. cap. 18. p. 68.* *Irenaeus* affirms that in his time every one receiving grace of Christ, after the quantity of his talent bent himself to benefit the other brethren in the name of Christ. *Euseb. l. 5. cap. 7. p. 82.* This practice is also affirmed to be lawful and usual in those dayes, in their open Assemblies: yea when Bishops themselves were present in the Congregation, as the Bishops of *Casaria* and *Jerusalem* maintains and gives divers instances in those days against one, who found fault only because they preached when Bishops were present; not for their preaching only or otherwise, yet this also they justifie, as that which was lawful and in common use at that day: yea and that which the Bishops themselves did then desire the brethren to do. See it at large, *Euseb. l. 6. c. 19. p. 106.*

Reynold in his conference with *Hare* c. 3. p. 103, 104, saith that all the faithfull owe the duty of strengthening their brethren each to other according to the measure of Grace given to them.

See Doctor Taylor Prophecie, p. 109.

Mr. *Hurdington* against Bishop *Jewel* (though Papist) yet he saith that Prophefying is expounding of Scripture and interpreting; and he there grants that in case God shall please when we come together in the Church for Comfort and Edifying, to give into our Hearts, and put into our Mouths what we should Pray and Preach, and how we should handle the Scripture, then we might do it; and he

there further saith and alloweth, that in the Apostles dayes they came into the Church to the intent that they might profitably Exercise the gifts God gave; and by the same (especially by the gift of Propheſying) edifie one another, and Teach one another. See this in Bishop *Jewels* reply to *Harding* p. 192, 193. And the Bishop himself agrees, that the brethren as well as Officers may have gifts of the Spirit; these are his words in p. 527. 532. That the Spirit of God is bound neither to sharpnesse of Wit, nor abundance of Learning; oft-times, (saith he,) the unlearned seeth that thing that the learned cannot see, and he there quotes *Ephiphanius* l. 2. for these words, only to the Children of the Holy Ghost all the Scriptures are plain and clear.

See Raynolds in his Conference with Hart. c. 2. p. 63

Bishop *Nicholson* of *Gloucester* in his aforesaid Book p. 32. from *Rom.* 12. 7, 8. saith, that those gifts are given to other Christians as well as to Officers, and that they ought to use these talents, as well as Officers; and there he proves it by other places of Scripture also. So that it is plain, that the brethren may have the Spirit of God and such gifts of Propheſying as Officers have; then surely it's given to them for use.

Mr. *Stillington* in his Book before mentioned, p. 249. saith, first that it was so in the Church-meetings of the Jews, these are his words; 'that any one amongst the Jews, who enjoyed any repute for Religion or knowledge of the Law, was allowed a free liberty of speaking for the instruction of the People, as we see (saith he) in Christ and his Apostles, *Act.* 13. 15. though they were so Officers. And secondly, he confesseth at large, that it was so in the Churches in the primitive times, that such did Preach, &c.

The Truth is, there is not one president of any credit for some hundred of years, of any complaint made against this practice or use, as unlawful, irregular or as an usurpation of, or intrusion upon the Ministers office, nor was there any decree in the Church of God in those dayes for the prohibiting of it. And it's very clear, by all the places before, that every particular Congregation did order every thing about this matter themselves and none else; since the Apostles dayes, did intermeddle with the ordering thereof.

Now, how the prohibiting of the brethrens improving their Talents in this case & robbing of the Churches of that profit Christ intended them, by bestowing such gifts, will be answered at the last day can hardly be resolved to the Comfort of such who shall be active in it.

That these Churches or Congregations usually met together for the performance of these and other things, when, and where they pleased, and as often as they agreed so to do without any prescribed Rules in the Apostles times, for either time or place (except on the Lords day) and that these Churches practised according to this liberty, for some ages: we think none can deny, since the Scriptures every where clear it, where the meeting of Christian Churches is spoken of: sometimes in Schools, sometimes in Houses, &c. as the Churches pleased, and was most convenient for them; and one Church was no rule in this, to another; nor were any places or times set down, as Rules for more than one Congregation to walk by; unlesse, they did voluntarily approve of what another did, and so do the same. Thus it was after the Apostles dayes as the *Magdeburgh Divines* say, *Cent. 1. l. 2.*

Mr. Vines  
of the Sa-  
crament,  
p. 194.  
agrees  
that these  
Churches  
have pow-  
er so to do.

Raynolds  
Confer-  
ence with  
Hart, c 8.  
P. 491.  
Raynolds  
saith  
Christians  
may sing  
the song of  
the Lord  
in all pla-  
ces, now,  
no ground  
unholy,  
every  
house  
and every  
faithfull  
Company,  
yea every  
faithfull  
body a  
temple to  
serve God  
in.

Cap. 6. Col. 422, 423. That no certain places or hours were prescribed, or enjoined in the Churches; but each Church did herein as was most convenient. It's true, we find, that after some time, They, for conveniency of meeting, built some places, used others formerly built for the commemorations of some Persons or things, as Ecclesiastical History testifies. And when the *Arian* Bishops had prevailed with the Emperor to shut up those places from other Christians; these met in private places, and built them new ones, and there met by themselves, yet were not these blamed in those days for these meetings, though not in their publick places; nor any punishment awarded for them: No, not by these cruel *Arian* Emperors. In those days nothing but the Churches meeting in any place did consecrate that place, and Worship was equally accepted in a House as in a publick Temple; in one place, as in another; at one time of the Day, as another.

That in these Congregations Societies or particular Churches, and not elsewhere, for some ages together from the Apostles downward, Offenders, scandalous sinners, wicked persons, &c. being members of the Congregations, were admonished Publickly, and in case of obstinacy or notorious fact, cast out of the Church, by the consent of the whole Congregation, whereof he was a member; that is, The whole Society, Ministers and brethren met together for that work. And by them again to be received in again upon repentance. And that the judgement of all, in this Case, lay wholly and only in this Church as such, and all this by Divine Right. The Church of Corinth (which was but one Congregation, who met in one place together,

Mr. Vines  
upon the  
Sacrament,  
p. 166, 95.  
say, That  
it was the  
power of a  
Church of  
Christian,  
as such, to  
prevent  
scandals.



er to partake of Ordinances, as before is proved)  
 and this power, 1 Cor. 5. where the Apostle blames  
 the whole Church for not casting out the wicked  
 person, *ver. 2.* charging them to meet, and doe it,  
 in the name (or power) of our Lord Jesus, *ver. 4, 5.*  
 and gave them to know, or put them in mind,  
 that it was their power and duty to doe it, *ver.*  
*2.* do not ye judge them that are within? faith  
 is it not your duty, and power to judge them  
 that are within your Church? is it not your practice  
 to doe? That this authority of theirs in this  
 matter carries the force of his argument, is plain,  
 from his conclusion, *ver. 13.* *Therefore put away,*  
*&c.* he would not have made their bare judgement,  
 that such a power resided amongst them, or that  
 they practised such a thing, his premises for such a  
 positive conclusion, had not the right of judging  
 and casting out been in them, according to Christs  
 mind, in that of *Matth. 18.* *Tell the Church, &c.*  
 Bishop Jewel was of the same mind from this Text,  
 because such a Church only (who can easily meet  
 in one place as a Church; not the general Church in  
 one sence or another, is capable to hear what is told  
 them, &c. See his words before set down at large.  
 and the same Apostle writes to this Church again,  
 as a Church to receive the same person in again, he  
 having manifested great repentance, And to this he  
 perswades them by several arguments.

First, That the former Censure of many was suf-  
 ficient unto him.

2ly. Lest he should be overwhelmed with sor-  
 row; and

Thirdly, Because of Satans device and design,  
 which was to destroy by that which was appointed  
 of God to heal. Therefore the Apostle beseecheth  
 them



them to receive him in again, 2 *Cor.* 2. 6, 7, 8, 11 which argues strongly, that their power lay in the also, as in casting him out. So he wrote to the *Galatians* to cut off such who troubled them with false doctrine, And we find the seven Churches in *Apoc.* acting thus, and not one blamed for the neglect of another in this matter, nor one commended for the good in another, but each Church for it self. *Pergamum* blamed for having such amongst them that held the doctrine of *Balaam*. *Thyatira* for suffering a woman *Jezabel* to teach and seduce, &c. The Church of *Ephesus* commended, for trying the false Apostles, *Rev.* 2. 2. 14, 15, 20. which clearly sheweth that these Churches had no dependency one of another; but each had power both to try false teachers and to have cast them out, not to have suffered them amongst them; and the not doing it, or the doing of it, accordingly is taken notice of by the Lord Jesus Christ, as a neglect, or a work of each Church, as particularly, and alone concerned, and the whole body of each Church, as is evident in those places, and these words there used in the close of what was written to each Church. Hence what the Spirit saith to the Churches; not to Officers, or particular Persons offending, or Bishops, but the whole, and they blamed for suffering such Persons amongst them. That those Churches were but particular Societies, or single Congregations, and the things spoken are spoken to the whole body of each Church. *Ambrosius, Ausbertius, Perkins* and *Brigheman* affirm. And also *Dr. Tulke, Tyndal*, and the Old Translators, call them seven Congregations. *Ephesus* one, and that said to be but one Flock, *Acts* 20. For at this time were multitudes of Jews and Heathens in this City. Ye

Magdib.  
Cent. 1. l. 2.  
cap 7.  
Col. 5. 22.

When Polycarp their Bishop was called out to suffer  
 there were but few Christians in that City, as *Eusebius*  
*History* tells us. The Presbyterian Divines  
 see this. See *Smelt.* p. 40, 41, 43.  
*Tertul.* also tells us, That in these Congregati-  
 ons, these things were done. In these Assemblies  
 with he) we make Exhortations and Threatnings,  
 and Divine Censures, that banisheth Sinners, and ex-  
 cludeth them from our Communion: We Judge  
 them (saith he) with very great Circumspection,  
 because we know that God is in the midst of us,  
 and knows what we do; *Apol. Cap. 39. p. 137.*  
 This the *Magdeburg.* Century Writers fully  
 see. And also sets forth the manner how the Con-  
 gregations did it, *Cent. 1. Lib. 1. Cap. 4. col. 158.*  
*ib. 2. Cap. 4. Col. 358, 359. Cap. 6. Col. 498.*  
 And again, they prove this from *Augustine, Cent.*  
*Cap. 4. Col. 380, 381, 382, 383, 384.* And  
 again, they say, from *Ambrose ad Valentinianum*  
*imperatorem.* That those Churches had this Pow-  
 er, and none else; and this ought to be done openly  
 by the Congregation, the People being present, *Cent.*  
*cap. 7. col. 500, 501.* And that, in the Epistle  
 of the *Roman Presbyters to Cyprian*, it is affirmed,  
 that the Presbyters, Deacons, and Lay-People  
 were wont to be together in Council, and to speak  
 and confer their own sense and mind in these things:  
 those days, *Cent. 3. cap. 7. col. 176. 152, 153.*  
 And that *Cyprian* himself saith, That as the Peo-  
 ple and whole Church hath Power to choose their  
 Ministers: So if the Bishops did fall into He-  
 resey, they were deposed by the Clergy and Peo-  
 ple, and they appoint another. And that it was  
 Lawful for the Bishop to do any thing herein  
 without the Peoples Councils, *Cent. 3. cap. 7.*  
col.

col. 173, 174, 175, 176. And again, they say that *Origen* did rebuke the Pride of some Priests those days, who did despise the Counsels of Inferior Priests and Lay-Men, *Cent. 3. cap. 7.* 151, 152, 153. Many more Testimonies might be offered for the proof hereof in those days, not denying it, or practising otherwise for many Ages. And Mr. *Stillingfleet*, in the same *Irenicum*, p. 4, saith, as to a Power arising from mutual compact and consent of Parties, he acknowledgeth a Power to bind all included under that Compact. Not the virtue of any supreme binding Power in them; but from the free consent of the Parties submitting, saith he; which he saith there, is most agreeable to the Nature of Church-Power, being not Coercive, but Directive; and then he avers, That such was the Confederate Discipline of the Primitive Church, before they had any Christian Magistrate. From which words of his may be gathered; That there was an Agreement amongst Christians of each Society or Congregation, to submit to the Laws of Christ; which he saith, none can be bound but those that consent (and it cannot be supposed that such a confederation or Agreement can be well made amongst more than can conveniently meet in one place, as a Church, that all are bound who do thus Confederate, or joyn themselves together in a Society: and that this Society and Church by virtue of this Confederation as a Church, hath Power in this case to deal with as many as do come amongst them, and consent. Especially, since he hath in the same Book, p. 13, agreed, that a real confederation ought to be betwixt those who joyn themselves together in Gospel-Ordinances in Order to their being a Church; and saith, that none will deny this, who know

Mr. Vines  
upon the  
Sacrament  
P. 129, 173  
194, 195,  
196, agrees all  
this fully.  
And also  
saith, That  
God gave  
this great  
Charter  
to the  
Church;  
not the  
Emperor,  
and that  
God gave  
it to them,  
as a  
Church.

that it is that makes a Society to be so, which is  
 such a real confederation with one another. And  
 afterwards, p. 148, 149. to the matters in hand; more  
 expressly he saith these things. That the Jews, being  
 the Church of God, secluded Men from their So-  
 cieties, which, saith he, may be looked upon not  
 as a civil, but a Sacred Action, and that they had  
 this Power of Excommunication: and for the Chri-  
 stian Church, he saith, the practice of Discipline  
 upon Offenders was never questioned, &c. That  
 hence, saith he, we gather in, that it hath been the  
 practice of Societies constituted for the Worship  
 of God, to call Offenders to an account for their Of-  
 fences, and if upon Examination they are found  
 guilty, to exclude them their Societies: and that it  
 is the dictate, of the Law of Nature, That every  
 Offender against the Laws of a Societie; must give  
 an account of his actions to the Rulers of the So-  
 ciety, and submit to the censures inflicted on him.  
 From all which sayings of his, this will follow:  
 That every particular Church or Society, joyn-  
 ing together by a Confederation amongst themselves,  
 have this Power within themselves, to call Offenders  
 to an account, and to seclude them their Society, if  
 there be just cause found. Yet take one place more  
 of him, and then we shall leave this as undenyable;  
 as in p. 228, 229. where he saith, It must in rea-  
 son be supposed, that all Matters of the Nature of  
 scandal to the Church must be decided there, *Mar.*  
 8. And there he Argues, the Lawfulness of Ex-  
 communication in Christian Churches; and adds  
 this: For if every Person (saith he) might with-  
 draw from the Society of such a one, as continued  
 refractory in his Offence, then much more may a  
 whole Society, and the Officers of it, declare such

a one to be avoyded both in Religious and Familial Society; which (saith he) is the formal ture of Excommunication. Thus Mr. *Stillington* Lodgeth this Power in every Society or Church joyned together by mutual consent, over every that consented; by the unquestioned practice the Churches, Nature of Societies, and the Law of Nature.

To these Churches, for the most part, the Epistles were directed, which the Apostles wrote, especially when they wrote to any as a Church; as the *Corinthians*, *Thessalonians*, &c. And when they wrote to more than one Congregation, though in the same Countrey, they directed them to Churches, in the Plural Number; as the Epistle to the *Galatians*: So the Epistle to the Churches of *Asia*; otherwise they wrote in general to all Saints, or all in such a Country, and not to a Church as such. And to these Churches, that is, The whole Body of each of them, Officers and People, all Church-Affairs were Directed. The Churches, as such, sent Messengers, &c. approved of such (to be sent to them) by their Letters, and as a Church Received Letters, assembled together to read them, to agree in things that concerned the Church; as the Church in *Antioch*, *Jerusalem*, and others, So after the Apostles days. *Ignatius*, *Polycarpus*, and others, wrote Epistles to Churches, as such, directed them to such particular Churches, and to the whole Body of them: and makes mention of their Ministers in the Body of their Epistles, as most of the Apostles did in theirs: See the Epistles of *Polycarpus* and *Ignatius*, at large. Yea, the Emperors themselves, when they had any thing to write to a Church, as such, about any thing that did concern

2 Cor. 8.

19, 23.

1 Cor. 16. 3

Act. 14. 25.

27.

Act. 15. 30.

Colos. 4. 16.

17.

1 Thes. 5.

27.



as a Church; as in the Matters of election of  
 Ministers or restoring them again after banishment.  
 They wrote to the whole people of the Church, as  
*Euseb.* and *Socrat* testifie. See the *Epist.* record-  
*Euseb.* of the life of *Constantine*, lib. 3. cap.  
 p. 52. 53, *Socrat.* lib. 2. cap. 2. p. 252. 253.  
 p. 18. p. 268. 269.

So that by this we have herein before set forth;  
 though but a part of what is Extant to the same  
 purpose) it may be judged somewhat clear, that  
 particular Churches have this power by Divine  
 right, unlesse it can be proved by better evidences,  
 that it is placed by Divine authority elsewhere, or  
 that this power is given to none at all: which we  
 think none will suppose. If therefore any have  
 wrested this power from these Churches, and invest-  
 ed any other therewith, and continue the same by  
 force of Humane Lawes, and so hold the People in  
 objection thereunto; It will be necessary good  
 warrant of Scripture be shewed for it: or else it  
 may be said of such as once it was said of the Scribes  
 and Pharisees. *Math.* 15. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. It is  
 written ye shall do so and so. But you say no, it  
 shall be thus and thus, as we may there see at large;  
 (as Christ there concludes against them) he  
 said, *In vain do ye worship, teaching for Doctrines*  
*the Commandements of men.* Or if men should be  
 Mr. *Stillingfleet* mind in the generall, That there  
 is no forme of government of Divine right. Or of  
 the Bishop of *Gloucester* his mind in this particular,  
 that the Peoples electing power was not a Divine  
 right. Yet let these judge of it so farre as the same  
 persons agree the Contrary in the same Book. And  
 Mr. *Stillingfleet* in p. 199. avers that all essen-  
 tials of Church Government are contained in Scrip-  
 ture

ture clearly. That essentials are such things that are necessary to the preservation of such a Society as the Church. From which words of his, may be gathered; That he grants here in a few words what he seems to bend his whole discourse against. For, whatsoever is clearly contained in Scripture is of Divine authority, all that is necessary for the preservation of a Church-Society, is therein contained, therefore Church-Government; yea in every forme of it, being necessary to Church preservation (or else there needs no talke about it, if not necessary) and contained in the whole of it in Scripture, is certain and of Divine right. And if men will not believe, that this doth follow, that he intends thereby, the forme should be included but that he would distinguish here; Then let the persons allow, but that which Mr. *Stillingsfleet* grants afterwards in the same book, p. 417. which is this. That that forme of Church-Government which comes nearest to Apostolicall practice is the best, and tends most to the advantage of the peace and unity of the Church of God. That this forme is to be gathered from Scripture, and Antiquity. Whence wee inferre, if then that be best and most for the Churches peace and unity, which comes nearest the Apostolick practice, &c. And this Government and order, we have before endeavoured to evince, be sufficiently proved to be nearest to Apostolicall practice, and gathered to be so from Scripture and Antiquity. Then, at least, it is the best forme of Government in the Church, and most for the Churches unity and peace. And so for the Bishops mind about Election of Ministers. If men (who will be of this Judgment against the Divine right of the people in this matter) also be swayed

ed by him to believe what he saith further about it ;  
 his words were before recited. That this was de-  
 rived upon the people from rules of Christian equi-  
 ty and society, and had admirable effects, as we  
 have fully set down under that particular head of  
 the Churches power in choosing their own Mini-  
 sters, look over his Words in *p. 27.* of his *Apol.*  
 whence in brief may be observed ; That, except  
 any other way of choosing them than by these Con-  
 gregations (as before) be derived from the same  
 rules and have the same good effects ; or it cannot  
 be proved that those rules and effects are equally  
 good with these, at least ; Then it follows, that  
 that way of making Ministers by the particular  
 Churches Election, is the best, and most for the  
 Churches, and also for the Ministers advantage ;  
 The Excellency of those Rules, and the Desireable-  
 ness of those Ends, still remaining ; and the contra-  
 ry effects from a contrary practice being apparent,  
 and the rules whence this latter way came in, can  
 hardly be made out to be of equall worth with the  
 rules from whence the former was derived.

Well then, if these premises be true and cannot  
 be disproved by better evidences and authorities :  
 We shall offer to consideration these things.

First, Why should any judge evil of those who  
 own, and practise according to this ? Or how in-  
 deed, can any (convinced of these things) joyn  
 themselves to, or have to do with any Church  
 or Congregation denying these things, or opposing  
 them, or giving up this power to others, and cast-  
 ing off their duty up on others, and whose Ministers  
 are made after another manner and imposed upon  
 them ? Or how can any such convinced Ones have  
 to do in Congregations and Ordinances otherwise

Mr. Hool-  
er Ecclef-  
Polity, in  
the Pre-  
face.

Ordered and Acting then according to this rule, in faith to expect Gods presence and blessing in it? how can any knowing these things (without renouncing Christ as Lord and Lawgiver in his church) own and subscribe to the exercise of this power by others, then these Churches? much more, how can any so convinced, enforce others to give subjection to any Usurping this power without sin against Christ. Whatsoever is not of Faith is sin; so that if we are found in the practice of any thing in these matters not commanded at all, or of any thing commanded, in other manner then is prescribed by the Law of Christ; we cannot groundedly believe for a blessing there, having no promise for it: Nay it is sin if we do but doubt it, *Rom. 14. 22. 23.* Therefore every one ought to be at liberty till he be convinced and fully perswaded in his own mind, ere he meddle with these things.

Secondly, Surely this then justifies and commends such, who being fully perswaded of the truth of the premises, do endeavour to regulate their practices in all Church affairs by these rules: for the Scripture saith, as we have received how ought to walk, and to please God, so should we abound &c. *1 Thes. 4. 1.* and as *Tymothy* was charged, to continue in the things he had learned, and had been assured of, knowing of whom he had learned them, and that from a Child he had known the Holy Scriptures, *2 Tim. 3. 14, 15.* So are Saints in general commanded to stand fast and hold the Traditions which they have been taught by word or Epistle, *2 Thess. 2. 15.* especially when they have by reading and searching the Scriptures like the Noble *Bereans*, *Act. 17.* proved these things to be so, and find that the primitive Gospel Church

es practised according to this ; and so, *trying all things, hold fast that which is good*, and stand fast in the liberty Christ hath left them ; for in so doing they are lesse like to erre, *Mark* 12. 24. do ye not therefore erre, not knowing the Scriptures, &c. And if these have their foundation for their practices here, they may boldly say with *Paul, Act.* 24. after the way they call Heresie, so worthy I, &c. believing all things that are written, &c.

Bishop *Jewel* in his reply to *Harding*, p. 111. alleadgeth these words out of *Cyprian lib. 2. Epist. 3.* (speaking of Bishops) If any of my Predecessors have not followed or kept that thing which the Lord by his Example and Commandement hath Taught us, he, for his simplicity, may be pardoned, but if we wilfully offend, there is no pardon for us, who are already warned and instructed of the Lord,

Again, that after God hath once opened his truth to us, if then we shall continue in error, &c. And again in p. 144. he quotes *Cyprian, ad Cael. lib. 2. Epist. 3.* for these words. It behoveth the Religion we professe, and our reverence towards God and the very place and Office of our Priesthood, to keep the Truths of the Lords tradition, and by the Lords advertisements to correct that thing, that by certain hath been amisse, that when he comes in his Glory and Majesty, he may find us to hold what he warned to keep ; that he taught us, to do that he did. All which words of his presse an exact keeping to the Rules left us, when we know them.

But if it shall be objected, that the people of the Churches are unlearned, and cannot understand scriptures, and thence 'tis they mistake and wrest scriptures ; that it is for learned Men, who under-



stand Tongues, &c. to give the meaning of Scriptures, and that others ought to submit to their judgments herein, and to practise as the learned Fathers and Doctors of the Church have done before us.

See Helis  
Serm. of  
the abuse  
of Diffi-  
cult places  
of Scrip-  
ture.  
Math. 13.  
10, 11.

For Answer hereto briefly. First, The Apostle by the term [unlearned,] intends not unskilful in Tongues, nor in humane learning, but unskilful in the Spiritual meaning of the Holy Ghost in the Scripture. We know the Gospel is hid to some, to them that are lost, &c. though otherwise never so learned wise or great; and to others it is given to know.

See the  
Confe-  
rence  
between  
Raynolds  
and Hart,  
c. 2. p. 58.  
cap. 6. p.  
207.

Secondly, That in this sence, the Scripture is not understood by the help of the greatest Art & Skil of Tongues, nor the largest humane Wisdome of any (this can only reach the letter) but by the help of the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 2. 14. The things of God are foolishness to the Natural man, nor can he know them, because they are spiritually understood or discerned. Now surely, none will deny but that a man may be very learned and wise in humane things, and have great skill in Tongues, and yet be but a natural man still, that is, not having the Spirit of God, by whom spiritual things are opened to us, where is the Wise? where is the Scribe? where is the Disputer of this world? and God chose the foolish things of this world to confound the wise &c. that no flesh should Glory in his presence, as is abundantly clear in 1 Cor. 1. 18, 19, 20, 27, 28, 29. And this was apparent amongst the Jews their most learned men ( Scribes and Pharisees chief Priest, &c. with all their learning and pretence to greater knowledge than the rest of the Jews, could not find out the meaning of the Pro-  
phet

Math. 13.  
7, c. 13, 10,  
11, 12,  
Luk. 19. 41  
42.  
Joh. 3. 10.  
Ag. 13. 17,  
27. Ag.  
26. 2.

phets concerning Christ, but Crucified Him; and Christ said of them, that they were the blind leading the blind, and that they were therefore blind because they thought they did see above others, although these were as confident, that they were the only knowing men; as the learned Doctors, and Rulers of Churches of latter ages, have been of themselves. And the contrary on the other hand, we see men of no knowledge in Tongues, &c. nor much worldly Wisdom when Christ by his Spirit had opened their understanding, they then understood the Scriptures.

And for this end amongst others was the Holy Ghost promised to the followers of Christ, he himself said, that such as believed should not sit in darkness, but have the light of life; that his Spirit should take of his, and shew it to them. And the Apostle saith, the anointing which they should receive should teach them, &c.

Thirdly, That this Spirit of God is neither promised nor given to the learned Doctors, able Schoolmen, or Governours of Churches only; but is promised to all believers in general, and so bestowed upon all Christs members in common, though in different Measures, as the Spirit pleaseth; and many times more abundantly upon such, who had least of outward greatness, of skill in the tongues, or humane Wisdom, that God might be glorified the more, and that no flesh might glory, as in 1 Cor. 1. ch. 2. before mentioned doth clear, therefore such may come to the knowledge of Christs mind in the Scriptures hereby, as well as learned men.

Each part of which answer Bishop Jewel in his reply to *Harding*, Bishop *Carleton* in his little

Jo. 9. 39.  
Bish. Jew-  
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to Hard-  
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526  
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31.  
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13.  
1 Epist.  
Joh. 2. 27.

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26. 9.

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31.  
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Eph. 1. 17.  
13.  
1 Epist.  
Joh. 3. 27.

Book before quoted, and others fully maintain: We shall transcribe some few things, first as to this, It is not learning but the Spirit of God that makes men able to understand Scriptures. Bishop Jewel p. 216. he saith out of *Tertul. Contra Hermogenem*, that knowledge of Philosophy and affiance of learning hath caused Divisions and Heresies in the Church, and therefore he called the Philosophers the Patriarchs of Hereticks; Again in p. 526, 527. out of *Chrysostome* he saith, that to understand Gods Word, we need no filogismes or knowledge of Logick, Husbandmen old men, &c. do understand it, that *Julian* charged the Christians that their women were so learned in the Scriptures, and again p. 532. he saith, out of *Epiphanius lib. 2.* that only to the children of the Holy Ghost all the Holy Scriptures are plain and clear: and again p. 434, that it is true that flesh and blood is not able to understand the will of God without speciall revelation, Christ opened the understanding of his Disciples, that without this speciall help of Gods Spirit, the word of God is unto the reader (be he never so wise or learned, saith he) as the Vision of a Sealed Book, &c. Secondly, as to this, that the Spirit of God is not given to the Doctors, rulers of the Churches or Learned men only; but also to all the members of Christ in common, in some measure; and that they ought to search the Scriptures, may understand them by the help of this Spirit, as well as the learned, who have skill in tongues, and humane learning. Cardinall Cajetan (though a Papist) at the Council of Trent affirmed this; *That a sence of Scripture, against the stream of the Doctors is not to be rejected, if agreeing with other Scriptures: For God, saith he, hath not tyed the sence to the*  
old



old Doctors. *Concil. Trident. lib. 2. p. 158.* Bishop Jewel in the same Reply to *Harding. p. 205.* saith, That Chrysostome did perswade his people to read the Scripture; That they are plain and easie; that the Ignorant and Simple men, by prayer unto God may attain unto the knowledge of them without any Master or Teacher, by himself alone; and he there quotes Chrysostome in *Math. Hom. 2. in Ps. 43. ad Colos. Hom. 9. Contra Anomaos. Hom. 3. in Gen. Hom. 35.* and for these words also, If thou use to pray diligently, there is no cause thou shouldst desire the teaching of thy fellow servant, for God himself will abundantly enlighten thy mind without any interpreter; and again, it cannot be that any man with great study, fervent desire, reading the Scripture, should be destitute, though he want the teaching of man, yet will God himself from above enter into our hearts, and lighten our minds and our reason, and open things that are hid, and become our teacher of such things we know not.

Again in p. 519. 531. 532. 534. &c. he alledgeth many Fathers to prove that the people ought to be diligent in searching Scriptures both men and women; That that is the way to keep from Heresies; That such who search cannot be deceived. And in p. 526. 527. he saith again, out of *Gerson.* That the weighing and consideration of Faith pertaine as well to others, as to the Prelates; yea to the Lay People, and that better many times (saith he) then to many Priests. And that we ought rather to believe a Lay man, if he bring the authority of Scripture then the Pope and a generall Council. And again p. 532. he (speaking of the understanding of the Scriptures) saith, That in these things the Spirit of God is bound neither to sharpness of

See Raynolds his Conference with Hart, c. 2. p. 62.

Wit, nor to abundance of Learning; oft-times the unlearned (saith he) seeth that thing that the learned cannot see. And again after p. 534. having said before, That without the speciall helps of Gods Spirit, the word of God is as a sealed Book, &c. He there adds these words, That this revelation is not speciall to some but generall to all the members of Christ. And he here blames Mr. *Harding*, for having so low an esteem of the Vulgar people, as the Scribes and Pharisees had of the followers of Christ: These are accursed not knowing the law, said they, Though the Apostles saith he, calls them Citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God. Again p. 537. That the learned Fathers have evermore thought, that in such perillous times of dissention in Judgment, it is most behoofull for the people to have recourse unto the Scriptures, *Act. 17.* And out of *Chrysostome: in opere imperfecto, Hom. 49.* upon these words, ye shall see the Abominations, &c. That Christian men who will be assured of the true Faith must resort to nothing but Holy Scriptures, else (saith he) they will be offended and perish; and not knowing which is the true Church, and by meanes thereof they shall fall into the abomination of the desolation. And out of *Chrysost. Hom. 49.* That we may in no wise believe the Churches themselves, unlesse they say and do such things, as be agreeable to Scriptures, Again p. 544. he saith out of *Theodoret de naturâ hominis. lib. 5.* That you may commonly see, not only the teachers of the people and Rulers of the Churches, but also Taylors, Smiths, &c. do understand the Principles of our Religion; women who live of their labour, Servants, Husbandmen, Ditchers, &c. can reason of the Holy Trinity, of the

See Ray-  
nolds  
Co fe-  
rence with  
Hart, c. 2.  
63.

the Creation of the world, of the nature of man, a  
 great deal more skillfully than either *Plato* or *A-*  
*ristotle* was ever able to do, and that *Origen* said to  
 his Hearers thus, when I speak what I think meet,  
 examine and judge you whether it be well or other-  
 wise. Upon which words the Bishop concludes  
 that in old times the Vulgar people were able, not  
 only to understand the Scriptures, but also to judge  
 their Preachers. And (as to our Father's exam-  
 ple) he saith p. 542. that our Fathers examples are  
 at all times sufficient Rules: for (saith he) they  
 have been led in Ignorance, Many Hereticks (saith  
 he) plead nothing but that they were born in, liv-  
 ing in that they now practise, and received from  
 their Fathers. So much of this Bishop here.  
 A word out of Bishop *Carleton*, and we shall con-  
 clude this. He in the same Book, (called a Directi-  
 on to know the true Church, p. 23. 24. 36. 37.  
 39. 44. 46. 47. 53.) there affirms and proves  
 by many Fathers, that the Scripture is the judge of  
 controversies; that we must not take what the  
 Church teacheth without limitation: For (saith  
 she) *she hath a Rule to teach by the Scriptures; and*  
*as long as she teacheth by this, she is to be heard. That*  
*is a manifest sliding from the true Faith, and an*  
*ident sign of Pride, to reject any thing that is writ-*  
*ten, or to bring in any thing which is not written:*  
*that we should not regard this or that man's sayings;*  
*we seek all these things out of Scriptures, from*  
*which we must in nothing depart.* And of the Pa-  
 trists, he saith, *That they presume that they deal*  
*with simple men, who may not examine their Do-*  
*ctrines;* and therefore he adviseth us, lest we should  
 be deceived, to look to our Rule, which is the Scrip-  
 ture. Now, from all this we have transcribed, we  
 may

*Origen in*  
*Joshua*  
*Hom. 21.*  
*Bishop*  
*Hooper in*  
*his Decla-*  
*ration of*  
*the ten*  
*Comman-*  
*fol. 46.*  
*Jer. 44. 17.*  
*18.*  
*Ezek. 20.*  
*18.*

See i  
 Confe-  
 rence be-  
 tween  
*Raynolds*  
*and Hare*  
*c. 2. p. 45.*  
*46.*

*Optatus*  
*l. 5. contra*  
*Parmeni-*  
*an Donat.*  
*Cited by*  
*Raynolds*  
*in the*  
*same Con-*  
*ference,*  
*p. 402.*

may conclude this Objection to be fully answered and the Matter undeniable; That other Members of the Church besides Learned Doctors, skilled in the Tongues, and Governors of the Churches, may understand the Scriptures by the help of the Spirit of God. That they ought to read them, and search them for this end; That God will give them his Spirit to open their Understandings; and sometimes more to those, than to the Learned Doctors: That Learning and Worldly Wisdom cannot unfold Scripture without the Spirit of God. That it is no safe way to follow our Fathers steps, nor the Rules of Councils, nor Churches, any further than they follow the Scriptures: That it is not safe in times of dissention in Judgment to make the Scriptures: That the Scripture is the Judge of Controversies. Now, we know it is in vain to leave unlearned men to read, and impossible to search the Scriptures, or try Doctrines by them, if Men unlearned in the Tongues cannot reach to understand them, or may not conceive of the sense of them, and give their Judgment of them, as their own Rule for their own Practices. And surely it is no ground enough for any Man to believe, that such a thing is the truth, and to expect Gods Blessing upon the Practice of it, barely upon this. That Learned Men, Nay, though very Godly Men, have Interpreted such a Scripture, or was of such an Opinion about it, or that the Learned Godly Men who went before us, did practice thus; unless so he himself be by their Demonstrations and Reasons, clearly satisfied in his own mind, that the Opinion and Practice therein is really the very Truth.

See Mr.  
Hilder-  
shams  
to this  
Lecture  
59. on  
Joh. 4.  
Lea. 8. on  
Joh. 4.  
Mr Gee in  
his Expo-  
sition of  
Rom. 18.

If these things be full to answer such an Objection

by Mr. *Harding* against the Protestants; why  
 as full and suitable, every way to confirm the  
 Answer here Offered by Protestants to the self-same  
 Objection made against them by their Fellow-Bre-  
 thren?

If it shall be Objected further, That many  
 Testimonies for the proving of the Premises, from  
 whence these conclusions are drawn, are not Scrip-  
 tures, but Traditions. To this Answer may be  
 made:

First, That those Examples and Evidences con-  
 trary with the Scriptures, and therefore the  
 more heed to be given to them; especially consid-  
 ering that these are only Matters of Practice gene-  
 rally owned, and not contended against in those  
 days; and also considering how some of these Te-  
 stimonies have remained so many hundred years un-  
 challenged against all the Endeavours of *Rome*, and  
 others, whose Interest and Practice these things op-  
 pose; and who have for their Interest sake corrup-  
 ted most of the Fathers and Councils, to make  
 them speak as they would.

Secondly, That they are the sayings and consent  
 of Antient and Modern Writers, and Men of dif-  
 ferent Judgments in other things; yet all accord in  
 this, as the Practice in those days in these things,  
 and that it was by Divine Right, which may add  
 the weight to them. But,

Thirdly, No more will be demanded, That these  
 Testimonies should speak for the Matter in hand;  
 in the Adversaries cause, these and the like Au-  
 thorities to testify against them: Surely it will be  
 granted, that they are as forcible, and may as ratio-  
 nally be used, where it makes for, as where it makes  
 against any position.

We



We are to keep the Ordinances and Order on delivered in the Church, as they were delivered by the Apostles, and according to which the Church of God in the Primitive times did walk : *Be ye followers of me*, saith the Apostle ; *Keep the Ordinances, (or Traditions) as I have delivered them unto you*, 1 Cor. 11. 1, 2. Therefore did he, when the *Corinthians* there had erred about the Lord's Supper, send them again to the first Institution, to regulate themselves by : after he had told them of their disorder, said, *I have received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you. That the Lord Jesus the same Night, &c.* and so repeats again the whole Institution, in the same Chapter, *ver.* 24, 25, 26. forms nothing anew, but repeats what he himself received of the Lord, both for Matter and Form.

Thirdly, Doubtless, such who fear the meddling with any other manner of Churches, Ministers, Ordinances, or other manner of Ministration, so to joyn with them, or partake in them, are to be commended, if they are confirmed by these Evidences in the truth of the Premises : For the Scripture tells us, we may not add to, or diminish from the Rule the Lord hath set us, but Obey that every thing, *Dent.* 4. 2. especially since the doing of any thing in God's Worship not commanded is so dangerous. What became of *Nadab and Abihu*, for their doing that which was not commanded though not forbidden in any expresse words, there could be no warrant in God's Law; *Lev.* 1, 2, 3. God also complains of such, *Jer.* 7. for building High-Places, which he commanded not : Therefore God did not only direct and command about the Tabernacle and Temple, and ev

part thereof, but also every Tittle of the Worship  
 therein, and the manner and Circumstances there-  
 out. And God takes it ill, as an intrusion upon  
 his prerogative Royal, when Men shall presume  
 to do any thing, in his Worship, as a part thereof,  
 which he commanded not, or walk therein by any  
 other Rule than what he hath prescribed, for no  
 man was permitted to vary by adding, or dimini-  
 shing.

See Bi-  
 shop An-  
 drews up-  
 on the se-  
 cond  
 command-  
 ment.

Mr. *Stillington*, in his *Irenicum*, p. 6. saith,  
 that whatsoever is looked upon, as a part of Wor-  
 ship, if not commanded of God, it is no way ac-  
 ceptable of God, therefore unlawful, *Mat.* 15. 9.  
 and saith, That *Tertul. de Orat. Cap.* 12. rejects  
 all those things, as superfluous and superstitious,  
 which are done without the Authority of the Lords,  
 or his Apostles commands. So say we, that such  
 as vary purposely may expect that God should re-  
 spect them, and their Offerings, and say to them,  
 who hath required this at your hands? The Pro-  
 phet *Isaiah*, Chap. 24. ver. 5. tells us the sad ef-  
 fects of such things: *The Earth*, saith he, *is de-*  
*filed under the Inhabitants thereof, because they*  
*transgressed the Laws, changed the Ordinances, &c.*  
*Bishop Jewel*, in his Reply to *Harding*, p. 111.  
 Quotes *Cyprian*, for these words which were be-  
 fore cited, *That if any of my Predecessors have not*  
*kept the thing the Lord hath taught us, he for his*  
*simplicity may be pardoned; but if we wilfully Of-*  
*fend, there is no pardon for us, who are already*  
*learned, and instructed of the Lord.* Yea, further  
 we say, all men are to be excused, though they pon-  
 der well, and do not hastily embrace these things thus  
 altered or added, till they are well tryed by the Rule,  
 the same *Bishop Carleton*, in the same Book, in  
 his

his Epistle to the Reader, said; *Because Seducers pretend so much to love Souls, and glory so much in the Name of the Church; he should be careful to try the Spirits of such men, that speak in them; he saith he, it is a great fault to believe anything without tryal: Again, Trust neither us nor them, until you have tryed; try before you trust.* And he then quotes Chrysostome for these words to his Hearers *That they should be more careful in trying Doctrines which are delivered to them, than in telling of Men's sayings.* Again, *That the Rule we walk by, must be known and certain; if not known, no Rule to us; if not certain, no Rule at all.* And this also, saith he, Cardinal Bellarmin agrees. And Bishop Neale, of Gloucester, in his afore-said Book, p. 67. adviseth such, who would be satisfied about Church-Government, to search it to the depth, and stay till he hath consulted the Ancients, &c. and p. 41. tells us, That it will not be enough for us to answer, that we have followed the Judgment of this or that Church; but upon what certain grounds we have followed it. That the ground of Conscience is Science; which also, saith he, flows from certain prime, immediate known Principles; not from probable or conjectural. From all which sayings of the Bishop, it's clear, That there is a necessity of trying things ere we practice, therefore not hastily to embrace things of this Nature. And the rather too, because some things may be set up like to Gods Ordinances, and yet not truly such. Thus was Jeroboam's Feast he Instituted, 1 Kings 12. 32, 33. The Text saith, *It was like to the which was Observed in Judea*, but it was not the same; for he had forged it in his own heart. And in such cases men may the easier be deceived. And

the Apostle, *Titus* 1. 13, 14. forbids us to give heed to Jewish Fables and Commandments of men, who turned from the Truth; therefore try of those things, which are offered to our practice in the Matters of God, is necessary, e're we meddle; That we may discern, whether God hath commanded them, or whether they are not Jewish Fables, or at best, but the Commandments of Men turned from the Truth. Nay further, Christians are not to busie themselves in enquiring into any other way, or manner of Worship than what God hath prescribed. *Israel*, when they were a Church, was charged, *Deut.* 12. 30, 31, 32. not to enquire, saying, how did those Nations Worship their God, lest they should be ensnared: But God gave them a press Commandment in these words; *That whatever thing I Command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it*; Thus God held them to the Rules he had prescribed them in the Matter and Manner of his Worship. And (well knowing how apt those his own People were to fall in with another way of Worshipping than that which he prescribed; and that they were apt to be taken with the general way of Worship used in most Nations, as afterwards they were for the Civil Government as other Nations, although God had appointed it otherwise at that time) cautions them before hand not so much as to enquire for another way, but cleave to that which he had ordered them.

How cautious then should Christians be of meddling with any thing in Divine Worship, and Church affaires, till it be fully clear to them, that every part therein, with which they have to do, be Gods Commandment, and agreeing to his mind; and

and not the way only of the generality of Worshipers, and Customes of the Nations, and those that went before them.

And let all this therefore perswade men (who would have these cautious ones punished for their practices, wherein they walk by the Rules of Gods Word and primitive example (as before) and also for their Non-conformity and forbearing to subscribe to another way: though they are not perswaded or convinced by Gods Word, and such Testimonies as are produced, that this other way is of God, or that God will own and bless them in it) to hear them speak further for themselves the words of the Godly Presbyterian Ministers, in their Petition for Peace and amending the Liturgy p. 5, 6. 18. They are these: *Suffer them, we desire nothing but to Worship God according to his Will, as near as we can: God, say they, is Jealous in the Matters of his Worship.* And for their Liberty in this, they offer these Reasons.

First, *Because they dare not consent to that which they Judge to be Usurpation of Christs Kings Power.*

Secondly, *Because They dare not be guilty of Addition to, or diminishing from his Worship, or doing by any other Law than that by which they must be judged: Suppose they mistake, yet it is commendable, say they, that they are fearful to displease God and dare not do that which they judge to be sinful against God: Should not the Love of Christ put upon tending of such as are tender of Gods Honour: For he, say they, that shall do that to please Men, or escape Sufferings, which he thinks is for no doubt deserveth the wrath of God. And (say they) should be loth to drive Men upon sin though*



though we know their own infirmities to be the occasion. It is Gods prerogative to search the heart, *Math.* 7. 1. 2. and these are ready to appeal to God, that what they do is only because they would not sin; And if others say they shall step into Gods Throne, and say, it is not for fear of sinning, not Conscience but Obstinacy; all humane converse, say they, upon these Terms, will be overthrown. And as in their Book of proceedings upon the Commission with the Bishops, p. 11. It will not justify us in the day of Judgment (if we sin) to say, that our Superiors Commanded us.

Fourth'y, That also it may be granted surely, that no man may rationally be blamed, much lesse punished for not obeying the Lawes of any persons (as a Church who assume to themselves, the name of the Church, as invested with authority to make Laws, to impose upon others in these Church matters: For, if a fourth Church on Earth distinct from the three descriptions above, be not found, and proved to be vested with this power, and capable to execute it according to Christs mind; none of these three did ever execute any such Power, the two first never made Laws, since they grew too big to meet in one place, the third never made any to be binding or observed further than in, and by the same Congregation or Society, where they were made, and by whom they were agreed to.

It is true we find, That other Churches liking the Rules, of some one Church, did imitate them and agree of the same in their Churches also, as *Socrat.* in his *Eccles. Hist.* lib. 5. cap. 21. p. 351. &c. affirms, That in those dayes there were diversities of Observations and Rites in several Churches, without any forcing of any; but every Church as it seemed

good to them ; and that such as liked those Rites did commend them to their Posterity for Laws.

And Mr. Thorndike in his Book called the true way of composing differences, pag. 26, 27. saith, *That if a part of a Church* (speaking there of a National Church, as men tearm it) *shall give Law to the whole, such part that so doth, for so doing are Schismatick*, If therefore any particular Church (being but a part of the whole in his sence) should make Rules for the whole, or if it be said that the Convocation or Synod is such a Church, who have this Power to make Laws for the whole, these also are but a part of the Church in Mr. Thorndikes sence, and but a little part too. If these therefore shall give Laws to the whole; then hear what Thorndike saith. If yet they say, *This is the whole Church in their Representative*. Answer first, cannot justly call themselves the Representative of the whole; for they were neither chosen nor sent by the whole, nor did the whole ever intrust them with any such Power: Nor were they chosen, sent and intrusted by the particular Churches of the whole, without which (in any rational way) they cannot be supposed to be the whole Church, in her Representative: no, nor the Church of *England* in her Representative, if not so sent, chosen and intrusted by the particular Churches thereof as above; nor will they (we presume) challenge any authority from Christ, immediately derived upon their persons to be the Churches Representative, and to make Laws for them.

But Secondly, If it should be granted (though against all reason) that they do indeed represent the Church of *England*: yet then it must be proved by the Word of God, or very good authority,

that

that any such Representative was called the Church and so accounted, and hath such power to make Laws for many Churches or Congregations by Divine-right, and to whose Laws those Churches were bound to give obedience for Conscience sake.

If that in *Acts* 15. be urged, it seems to be altogether impertinent, unlesse they will make the Apostles (and whether all or some only we cannot determine) *the Elders of the Church in Jerusalem*, and all the brethren of that Church, a Convocation, or Synod. And such another we can hardly find now adayes; that this was so and no other, is apparent from the very Text, for all these met together about the matter, and it is said verse 22, *It pleased the Apostles and Elders, with the whole Church, to send chosen men of their own Company, &c. cheif men amongst the brethren*; and in the next verses we find, That the Apostles, Elders and Brethren, wrote about the matter, and say, *It seems good to us being assembled together, with one accord to send, &c.* here the brethren were as much the Convocation, as the Elders. But then also consider the causes, why the Church at *Antioch* sent to this Church at *Jerusalem* about this matter, and why they in *Jerusalem* write their mind again to them, they are two. The first may be Supposed, that is, because there were some of the Apostles, the second is Expressed, that is, because those men who came to *Antioch* and preached the Circumcision there, pretended that they came from *Jerusalem*, from the Apostles and whole Church there, with this Doctrine: therefore was there great reason, why they should apply themselves to them to be resolved of the truth in that matter, for about the same question *Paul* and *Barnabas* had be-

fore disputed at *Antioch*, and also mark the matter they write about, it hath a suitableness to that, which they had desired to be resolved in. The epistle tells them, that they who wrote the Epistle, had given no such commands to those men to teach such things, *ver. 24.* And further, *That it seemed good to the Holy Ghost to lay no greater burthen upon them than such necessary things therein mentioned*, which things were necessary to be abstained from; because the use of them would then have offended, and fornication was sin in it self; and by the way, note, here are no new things required to be done of those, but somewhat they should forbear to do, because by doing it they may offend such who could not judge it to be lawfully done, and sin. Here now is not the least footsteps for such a Synod as the Convocation, our Council of Bishops or Ministers, as a Church to make lawes which shall be binding to any more than themselves, who agree to them. For the Church at *Jerusalem* (had such a thing fallen out with them as did at *Antioch*; That some had come from *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and that Church, with false Doctrine unto them) might as well have written to them at *Antioch*, to have been resolved, And *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and the Elders and Brethren of that Church of *Antioch* might have written an Answer to them with equall authority.

Nay, but is there ground to give like credit or subjection to a Rule of any Convocation or Synod now, as there was to the Apostles in those days? Surely No; But if it be said, that they are the Churches Representative, and their Lawes are the Lawes of the Church by humane authority only, then it will be necessary to prove, That such, who  
take

take upon them to make Churches and Convey power to them, by their Lawes, have such a power delegated to them from Jesus Christ so to do; Otherwise their Lawes will not creat such a Church with authority in these cases, and to whose Laws obedience is to be expected for Conscience sake. The old Rule must be remembered, None can give to another that he hath not in himself.

But if it be said, that the Governours of the Churches of a Nation or Kingdome, with the Magistrates authority, have power to determine of matters indifferent in their owne nature, about the worship of God and in Church Government, and by Law to impose them, upon the particular Churches of that Nation.

For Answer to this first, we think it a matter of no small difficulty, for either Magistrates or Governours of Churches, or both together to determine what things are so indifferent in their own Nature, about the worship of God, and as to their use and practice, that they must needs be so accounted by all the members of the Churches there: For this is Necessary in this Case: Christs Law *Rom. 14.* being clear in this; That if any absolutely indifferent thing used or imposed be really an offence to weak Christians, that is, when such weak ones do upon serious thoughts, judge the things themselves in their own nature, not indifferent, or else as they are used and circumstantiated, but sinfull or suspitious, in this case they may not be used by other Christians, much lesse imposed: For if these weak ones should do this, when imposed, while they thus judge, they should sin, And for such as look upon these things and impose them as indifferent, they may without the least scruple lay aside the use

Hookers  
Eccles Po-  
lity in the  
Preface.



of them themselves, and much more dispense with others for not using them : For a thing purely indifferent may as well not be used as used, especially when they prove an offence to others ; If men choose to obey God rather than Men.

Thus saith Mr. *Stillington* in his *Irenicum*. p. 63. *That nothing should be determined, but what is sufficiently known to be indifferent in its own nature, and he there confesseth, that there is a great difficulty to know sufficiently what is so ; and gives this as his reason, because one looks upon that to be indifferent which another doth not.* And again in p. 118.

See Doctor  
More in  
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ed the Mi-  
tery of  
Godliness  
Book 10.  
c. 10. p. 515,  
516, &c.  
treating of  
liberty of  
Conscience.

119. He saith, *that the power of Governours in these things extends not to bind men to go against the dictates of their own Reason and Consciences, and again there, saith he, when all is said every man will be his own judge in this case concerning his own welfare, and that an erroneous Conscience takes not off the obligation to follow the dictates thereof.* So that from this (were there no other thing in the case, but that men do differently judge of the same things, both as they are in their own nature, and also in their use and ends) Church Governours would find it work enough to determine such things so as it cannot be an offence to any : which thing must be regarded, if Christs Law be had in any reverence. Yet further, *there are many other considerable things in this case, as to their use and ends, and as those things determined may be circumstantiated.* As first, when things determined to be used in the matters of Gods Worship, do not in truth answer the ends of their use, and whereto they were determined above others, as for Edification, Decency, Order and Peace in the Church, and in these cases also, every man must be his own judge, whether

it doth in truth lead to those ends, or not; they may be offensive, and then (if the Apostle *Paul*, may be judge) they are not to be used, for the totall laying aside, and not using such things at all, will tend most to Peace and Edification, *Rom. 14. 10.* and thus the Fathers in former ages judged; for which Mr. *Stillington* in his aforesaid Book. p. 68. 69. Quotes *Aug. Epist. 119. ad Jan. Cap. 19.* for this, that he desires there, that such things might be taken away, and useth these words as his reasons; *That although we cannot positively say, how such things as those do manifestly impugn our Faith; yet in that they load our Religion with servile Burthens* (which the mercy of God hath left free) *that they make our condition worse than that of the Jews; for they, although strangers to Gospel liberty, had no burthen charged upon them by the constitutions of men, but only by the lawes and commandments of God.* And again p. 61 62. he Quotes *Ambros.* and *Augustine* against imposing of things indifferent upon this very ground, because they answer not the ends intended but produced the contrary effects and he therefore cites these words of *August.* to this purpose, *I saith Aug. have often found it to my grief and sorrow that the troubles of weaker Christians have been caused by the contentious obstinacy of some, on the one hand, and the superstitious fearfullness of others, on the other, in things which are neither determined by the authority of Holy Scripture, nor by Custome of the Universal Church, nor yet by any usefullness of the things themselves, in order to the making of mens lives better, only for some petty reason in a mans own mind, or because it hath been the Custome, of their Country, or because they have found it so in other Churches; they raise such*

*quarrells and Contentions, that they think nothing Right or Lawfull, but what they doe themselves.*

See the  
Confe-  
rence of  
Raynolds  
with *Har-*  
c. 8. p. 510.  
Raynolds  
maintains  
it to be  
duty to re-  
move such  
things as  
our fathers  
set up, if  
turned to  
error and  
superstition.  
and  
quo es the  
Canon  
Law, Dist.  
63, for it.

Secondly, Another thing may make the use of indifferent things about Gods worship unlawful as to their use ; that is, where they are used by the generality of people, not as indifferent things but as necessary ; with an opinion that their worship is not perfect except it be performed after the manner determined, which is an abuse of them. It is true the Papiſts say of their Images, they are but indifferent things : yet it is well known, that the generality of them do not so esteem of them ; which Mr. *Stirlingfleet* also fully agrees, in the same Book p. 64. So it is certainly known amongst us Protestants, that the generality do look upon and esteem of many things (indifferent in their own nature) determined and long in use, as necessary ; so that they think no part of Gods Worship, or Church affairs well performed, or perfect, if not exactly done, according to that rule determined and in use ; and therefore will not willingly do any thing otherwise ; though they were never Compelled to it by law : which indeed hath been the ordinary effect of a Constant use of any indifferent thing about worship or Church matters, that people by Custom and Usage drink down an opinion of the necessity of their use , and cannot endure their removal : Wherefore that indifferent things might be still known to be so, and so accounted : they should be used indifferently ; and not the same constantly, - to prevent this superstitious and Idolatrous opinion men apt to have of them by their countenance. Bishop *Jewel* in his reply to *Harding* p. 542. said *that many Hereticks plead nothing, but that they were*

ere born in, lived in that which they now practise  
nd received it from their Fathers.

Now for others to use these things, otherwise in-  
different in themselves, is to harden these in their  
error and superstitious opinion.

Thirdly. This also may make the use of Indiffe-  
rent things unlawfull, when the things determined  
and imposed are not so judged by those, who de-  
termine them; nor determined and imposed by  
them as things indifferent, but as things necessary.  
In this case it is not to be used; then much lesse im-  
posed. Protestants in generall agree; That it is  
insufficient warrant for our separation from the  
Church of Rome, because they impose things upon  
mens Consciences as necessary, which are doubt-  
full, unlawfull, suspected, or offensive to weak  
brethren. This Mr. *Stillington* agrees in his said  
Book; and again in p. 119. he saith, *Let men turn  
and wind themselves whether they will, by the same  
Arguments that any will prove separation from the  
Church of Rome Lawfull because she requires un-  
lawfull things, as conditions of her communion; It  
will be proved lawfull not to conform to any suspected  
or unlawful practice required, by any Church Gover-  
nours upon the same terms, if the things so required  
be upon serious and sober enquiry judged unwarrant-  
able by a mans own Conscience.* And again p. 61.  
62. he saith, *that whatsoever is imposed as necessary  
doth immediately bind Conscience; and that none  
can have command of Conscience, but God himself.*  
For all these things see what the *Magdeburg Divines*  
say. *That in the use of these things we must take  
heed lest weak brethren be offended, or obstinate  
or refractory ones, in their pertinacious and ungod-  
ly opinions, be confirmed.* Cent. 1. lib. 2. Cap. 4.

Col,

Col. 414, 415, 416. And again, *That they may be used freely; if Compulsion happen not, Opinion of Worship, Necessity, Scandal, or manifest Occasion of Ungodliness.* But, say they, if any of these things happen, by which the weak and Godly are Offended, the Refractory and Adversaries of Truth are confirmed in their error, then these things ought not to be used freely. Cent. 1. Lib. 2. Cap. 4. Col. 441, 442.

But if it be said here, That these things are not determined, as things necessary, but as things indifferent: For Answer, First, Neither those who determine these things, nor those who do impose them do declare, that such things so determined in the whole of them, are indifferent things in their own Nature, nor that they ought to be so accounted in the use of them. And Secondly, It seems clear, that they do determine of these things above others, and so use themselves, not as things indifferent, but as things necessary, and so immediately binding to Mens Consciences: For either they determine of them, above others, and so impose them, as things tending to Peace and Edification, and for Decency and Order; or for no end at all (unless it be to make Men bow to the Judgment of such Men who thus determine;) if the latter, no warrant can be pretended for it; if the former, then are the things necessary (if we must look on them to tend to this end more than other indifferent things do) for things, truly tending to those ends, we are bound to regard by Divine Command, and so the Conscience becomes bound. Whatsoever things indifferent in their own Nature, be determined above others to be used in the Matters of God, as that which above other things tends to Order, Decency,



ry, Edification, or Peace and Union in the Church, and imposed by any, who have Power for to Judge, Determine, and impose them; in this case Obedience must be given, either because those things are indeed best conduce to the End (and then we ought to use them without imposing, if we look upon them so.) Or because we are to believe them to be so upon this ground, That God (having given the Power to these Men to determine in these Matters and impose) doth also give them Spiritual Wisdom and Judgment above others in these things, and lead them infallibly to determine of these things; to which we ought, by Divine Command, to submit our selves. If upon either of these we Obey them, our Consciences are immediately bound, and they become necessary things: For we are Commanded to follow those things which make for Peace and Edification; and also to Obey them which have the Rule over us. Upon one or both these grounds Governors determine and impose, or upon none at all; either that the things are above others for Order and Decency, Edification and Peace; or as the Governors are such over us, whom we ought to Obey, in these things, as infallibly guided.

If any shall pretend that they are not determined infallibly the best to the ends proposed, then it will follow, That no Obedience at all can be expected from such Persons, who may Judge (and that rationally and Christianly too) that those determined things, in Truth do not answer those ends proposed, so well as other things may do, but rather that they hinder and oppose them.

But further it will appear, that indifferent things are determined and imposed, not as indifferent, but

as necessary : first then, when the Laws about such things are made severe ; and less strict about things necessary ; and when the Execution of those severe Laws are violently pressed by those Persons who determine of these indifferent things, and at the same time good Laws about necessary things not regarded.

Secondly, Then when such who cannot submit to the indifferent thing imposed, in the manner of doing, may not use the necessary thing it self, as not to Exercise a Mans Ministry in the Church, over which the Holy Ghost hath made him a Bishop. Or not to meet, pray, exhort, &c. and Worship God, as he hath appointed. Not to Baptize, not to Communicate at the Lords Table, not to call out wicked Persons, or remove Offences (all which things are necessary, being Gods Ordinances) unless they do all these after the form and manner determined and imposed ; yea and then, when they are set so high, That no Person who cannot submit to such Forms and Rules in such things (which they call indifferent) in Gods Worship cannot, or may not have any Communion with the Churches thus imposed upon, but be Excommunicated upon this ground only, that they submit not to those determined things, as to those which are most Decent, and for Order and Edification, Unity and Peace in the Church, and imposed as such, though such things be esteemed otherwise of by those Persons who submit not to them. If this make not such determined things to become necessary Conditions of Communion, we know not what doth : And it may be, the things themselves so determined of, may be in themselves unlawful, suspected, and Offensive to weak Brethren.

So that from all these things which may happen in the case of indifferent things: It may easily be granted, That it is a very difficult work to find out things in their own Nature so indifferent, that they shall not be doubted, suspected, or judged unlawful, and not Offensive unto any; that shall so fully answer the end proposed, that they may be determined as the best above other indifferent things for that purpose; and not to be judged otherwise by such Churches and Christians who must use them; And so to determine of the manner of their use, That the generality shall not esteem them as necessary, or use them so; or that they should be so used, as not to restrain the free use and Exercise of Necessary Duties of Worship, and in Church Affairs, although performed in another way by such, who cannot submit to the way prescribed. That the use of them shall not harden or encourage the Refractory in their errors: All which things, no doubt, ought to be well weighed ere Men undertake to determine of, and impose those things which Christ hath left free, and which the Church in the Primitive times used as things indifferent; and each Church ordered and altered as they pleased: For if either of these things fall out in the case; these indifferent things may not be used, though they should be granted to be never so indifferent in their own Nature, much less may they be imposed.

But, Secondly, If the Matter were granted to be evident, that they might find out, and determine of indifferent things, so as to answer the ends of their use, and be freed from the abuse: The next thing to be resolved, is, By what Rule of Gods Word can these make out, That this Authority is derived upon them from Christ, thus to determine

See Doctor  
Taylor li-  
berty of  
Prophecie.  
p. 109.

of

Mr. Hooker in his Eccles. Polity, first Book, p. 26, 27. saith, Impossible it is that men should have complete lawful power but by consent of men, or immediate appointment of God. Power if lawfull, then it is either granted or consented to by them over whom they exercise the same, or else given extraordinary from God.

of one indifferent thing above another to answer the ends of the use thereof, and to be imposed upon the Churches within their reach. Either they must have it immediately from Christ, and have promises of Guidance herein; or conveyed to them by the Churches themselves. To derive it from Christ immediately is a very hard work; and sure they will not challenge it as conveyed to them by the Churches, unless they will first acknowledge the Churches to have this Power in themselves, and then make it out, that every particular Church and Society in that Nation, have given their Vote to intrust them with this Power; but the Truth lyeth in the quite contrary: For, First, Those who undertake to determine thus for the Churches, will not confess, That these Churches have Power to determine of themselves, or to choose any to determine for them; and then they can never prove any such Power by the Churches Vote. No such things were known among the Primitive Gospel-Churches; For every Church or Congregation did in these indifferent things even as they amongst themselves judged fit, and agreed, being left free by Christ and his Apostles, so the Churches used them. None for many Ages undertook to determine, nor did the Churches impower any so to do. Nor indeed is any such trust reposed in any Persons, by the Churches at this day. The particular Bodies of Congregations, and many of their Officers too, are looked upon in this Matter, as insignificant Cyphers. It is true, Episcopal Assemblies, after a few Ages, began to take upon them to give some Rules to Churches (though those were Observed, but so far as the Churches thought good) yet these determinations of theirs, answered not the ends pretended:

For,

For, as it is cited before in this Discourse, out of Gregory. That Contentions have been always increased by Episcopal Assemblies; so, he that reads the Ecclesiastical History impartially, may every where plainly perceive the truth thereof: And how far they answered the ends of Order, Edification, Peace, and Unity in the Churches in these days, we shall leave the judicious observers of such things to judge. Then may we enquire further, How any rational Account can be given, why one part of the Christians in a Nation, and those very few in comparison of the whole, should determine of such things to be imposed, for all the rest, seeing no special power is derived upon them so to do, nor any promise of infallible Guidance in this matter entailed upon Them more than upon others. And as to these Matters we shall offer a few things more, in Mr. Stillingfleet his own words, in the same Irenicum, p. 45, 46. That the Pastors or Governors of Churches are commanded, Mat. 28. 20. To teach what Christ had commanded them; but no Authority, saith he, thereby given to make new Laws to bind the Church, but rather a tying them up to the Commandments of Christ, already laid down in his Word. For, saith he, A Power to bind Mens Consciences to their determinations lodged in the Officers of the Church, must be derived either from the Law of God giving them this right, or else only from the consent of parties: For any Law of God, there is none produced, saith he, with any probability of Reason, but that, Heb. 13. 17. Obey those who have the Rule, &c. But that, saith he, implies no more than submitting to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Gospel, and to those whom Christ hath Constituted as Pastors of his Church, wherein the Law of Christ doth require Obedience,



obedience, &c. But this (saith he) gives them no Authority to make new Laws or Constitutions binding mens Conscience, any more than a command from a Superiour Authority, that inferior Magistrates should be obeyed doth imply a Power in them to make new Laws to bind them. Yet he here acknowledgeth a Power arising from the free consent of the parties submitting : which (saith he) is most agreeable the Nature of Church Power, being not co-active but directive. And that such was the moderate Discipline of the Primitive times ; And again further in p. 118, 119. That if it be said, that men are bound to be ruled by their Governours in determining what things are lawful and what not, he Answers, That no true Protestants can swear blind obedience to Church Governours in all things ; That it is the Highest usurpation, to rob men of the Liberty of their Judgment : That it is our plea against the Papists, that every one hath a Judgment of private discretion, which is the rule of practice, as to himself.

We (saith he) allow a Ministerial Power in the Governours : yet (he saith) this extends not to bind men to go against the dictates of their own reason and Conscience, their Power is only directive and declarative, and in matters of Duty can bind no more than reason and evidence brought from Scripture by them, doth. Again either therefore men are bound to obey all things absolutely, and without any restriction or limitation ; which (saith he) if it be not Usurpation and Dominion over others Faith in them, and the worst of implicit Faith in others ; It is hard to define what either of them is : or else if they are bound to obey only in lawful things, I then (saith he) enquire, who must  
be

be judge what things are Lawful and what not : If the Governors, still then the Power will be absolute again, for to be sure (saith he) what ever they Command they will say, it is Lawful either in it self, or as they Command it. If every private person must be judge, what is lawful and what not, which is Commanded, then he is bound no further to obey than he judgeth the thing to be lawful, which is commanded. And he there affirms, (as we have before set down) that every man will be his own judge in this Case ; and that the plea of an erroneous Conscience takes not off the Obligation to follow the dictates of it. Again let men (saith he) turn and wind themselves which way they will, by the same Arguments any will prove separation from the Church of *Rome*, Lawful ; because she requires unlawful things as Conditions of her Communion. It will be proved Lawful not to conform to any suspected or unlawful practise required by any Church Governours upon the same Terms, if the things so required, be upon serious and sober enquiry judged unwarrantable by a mans own Conscience. And again in p. 120. 121. he quotes Mr. *Hales* of Schism, p. 8. for this, That where any thing unnecessary, suspected, and by many held unlawful, is imposed ; it is duty to separate. See this more at large transcribed there in Mr. *Stillingfleet*, who there Commends *Hales* for as Learned and Judicious a Divine, as this Nation bred. And Mr. *Stillingfleet* there adds these words. If we (saith he) would take away all unnecessary things, suspected by many, and judged unlawful by some, and make nothing the bounds of our Communion but what Christ hath done, &c. allowing a liberty for matters of indifferency, and bearing with the weakness of those, who cannot bear

See the  
Bishop of  
Glou.  
Apol. p. 41.

things which others account lawful; We might, (saith he) indeed be restored to a true Primitive lustre.

Tertul fo  
Scapula.

So Mr.  
Hooker  
his Ecclef.  
Policy in  
the Preface  
asserts that  
whatever  
we doe, if  
our own  
secret  
judgment  
consent not  
unto it as  
fit and  
good: so be  
done, the  
doing of it  
is sin to us,  
a though  
the thing it  
self be al-  
lowable.  
Rom. 14. 5.  
See also his  
second  
Book, p 58

All which things of Mr. *Stillington* may as forceably be turned against the Magistrates imposing these things by Law, as against the Church Governors determining them to be imposed: for if one were not absolute in their Power, to determine of one indifferent thing above another, for others to practise; sure neither the other to impose such things: for what ever may not lawfully be determined for, or required of, may not be imposed upon others, and they compelled to obedience. That which Christ hath left indifferent about these things should be so used, and no man should presume to take away their indifferency by imposing them by force of Law; since God hath not given to every man alike apprehensions of the same things, as the Apostle saith, one esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day alike. And again, I know that nothing is unclean of it self, but to him that esteemeth any thing unclean, to him it is unclean. All things are pure, but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence; therefore he directs here, that every man should be fully perswaded in his own mind, *Rom. 14. 5. 14. 20. and chap. 15. 1.* That the strong should bear with the infirmities of the weak. And again *1 Cor. 8. 4. 7.* he saith, we know an Idol is nothing, &c. howbeit there is not in every man this knowledge: where he also in the latter end of the same chapter, exhorteth those who do know, to have respect to those who do not know, and rather than offend them, not to use their own liberty in such things which were indifferent in their own Nature.

Thus

Thus we see the Apostle (though he could infallibly resolve the lawfulness of the things in themselves) yet would he be so far from determining these things to be done by others who had other apprehensions, that he would not use the things themselves, nor would he have others to use them, where their use proved offensive to weak ones: and would have every one perswaded in his own mind (and this he knew was Gods prerogative only) Such who offend their brethren by the contrary, sin against Christ. How then is it possible to justify an imposition of such things by Laws (which say they, bind Conscience to obedience because the Magistrate commands) upon such who doubt of the lawfulness of the things themselves, or as they are circumstantiated: for this is to put such upon a necessity of sinning, either they must do the thing injoyed, and so sin; or if they do it not, they sin in not obeying the Magistrate (if the Magistrate commands makes it necessary;) sure we are, that in the Primitive Churches, they thought so: for neither Governours of Churches, nor Emperours (when Christian) did for some ages, determine for, or impose upon many Churches in these things; or if any did tamper this way, the Churches did not take themselves at all bound to regard it: for in those dayes so may Churches or Congregations, so many several usages or forms in these things, as each Church thought best and most convenient for them. Thus the *Magdeburgh Divines* agree *Cent. 2. Cap. 7. Col. 134. 135.* That every Church had a like Power to exercise the Ceremonies received from the Apostles, or to make new ones for edification: so also saith *Socrates* of his dayes in his *5th. Book 21. chap. English transl. p. 351. &c.* That

See Doctor Moor in his Book intit. myltery of Godlines, Book 10. c. 10. p. 515, 516, &c. treating of liberty of Conscience and of the Duty of Christian Magistrates in matters of Religion. See also de Eccl. 1. 4. c. 14. maintains liberty in Religion by many Arguments, See Hookers Polity. p. 159, 160. 161. of his fourth Book.

in those days there were diversity of observations and Rites in several Churches, without any forcing of any, but every Church as it seemed good to them, &c. That it is plain, that the Apostles left every man free without Fear, Compulsion, or Constraint, to adiect himself to that which seemeth to him to be good and Commendable; That hardly could two Churches be found, that observed the same Rites, and Ceremonies; that in the observation of *Easter* and other holy dayes every man did as he thought good, &c. see this at large.

So that from all that hath been said in this matter; we cannot think that upon a sober discourse, Those that call themselves the Governours of the Church will ever arrogate to themselves, by pretence of Divine Authority, any special right to determine of any indifferent thing above another, to be that which is every way lawful and inoffensive, and that which is most for edification, decency and order, unity and peace in the Church: Or that they have any special skill of judging in this case, above other learned and Godly men in the Church: and if not, then it may be believed that they will say, be it far from us to determine in such cases, for others, or to desire our determinations should be imposed upon others; And then we are confident the Magistrate will be farther from Challenging any right to determine of those things, nor will he undertake to impose by Law upon the Churches: but it hath been common amongst Church men to deal subtilly in these things, first themselves determine and set down Rules in these cases, and tender them to the Magistrate to confirm by Laws, as those things which are necessary to the ends aforesaid; And then when they are established by Law; and they



they themselves cannot justifie many or any of them to be necessary, or any way answering the ends proposed; They presently lay the charge upon the Magistrates, and say, its commanded and we must obey, being by virtue of his Law bound in Conscience so to do. Certainly, let us not deceive our selves, God is not mocked, Christ hath pronounced a wo against them by whom offences come. The excuse of the Magistrates commanding it, will not serve their turn when our Lord comes to judge in Righteousness.

Yet there are some who are highly offended against such who walk after the Rules herein before set down, as near as they can, and fear to erre from it, as that way of worship and managing of Church affairs, which they judge according to Gods word to be Christ's mind they should walk by; and as that in which the Churches, in the Primitive and best ages walked; and which also hath been by many learned and Godly men in all ages since, held to be the true way. And these offended ones generally conclude against such, that they are Separatists from the Church, Schismatics, Factious, &c. for so doing (the old Callumnies cast upon the Apostles and other Saints in former ages, and by Papists upon Protestants in latter ages) and their way called Heresie and evil spoken of, as *Act. 24-c.25.c.28*. Though in Truth these offended ones understand not, in this case, what they say, or whereof they affirm: either it is pure ignorance in such, not understanding what a Church is, from which properly a Separation may be said to be made, or in which a man may be said to be guilty of making a Schisme; or what Act it is that may properly be called a separation from, or constitute a man a Schismatick in such a Church; or else ignorance, that is wilful, arising from interest that blinds them: These do just (as the Presbyterian Ministers, once said in *Smelt. p. 58. 59.* take it in their own words. *These do (as the Papists) dazzle the Eyes and astonish the senses of poor People with the Glorious name of the Church, &c.*

This is the *Gorgons-Head* (as Doctor *White* said) which enchanted them: they call, say they for obedience to the Church, &c. no mention of God and Scripture, If we (say these Divines there) question what is meant by the Church of *England*, they storm, as he that holdeth by an unjust Tytle will not suffer the Tytle to be questioned; they (say these men) sometimes make the Convocation the Church, excluding both Presbiters and people, as not worthy to be reckoned of the Church; sometimes the bounds of the Kingdome is the Church. If so, say they, why not *England, Scotland, and Ireland* one Church, being under one Monarch.

Thus they contend and know not upon what foundation; but, having heard of the name of the Church, and found Ordinances and Formes of worship amongst them, and Discipline used according to humane Laws and Constitutions: here they go and never so much as enquire, or put it to the question, whether they are agreeable to Scripture, or Rules prescribed by God; And then they take it for granted presently; that such, who do not in these matters as they do, are Separatists and Schismatics, and deserve punishment (as rashly as the two Disciples did in another case *Luke 9.* who would have fire from heaven upon the *Samaritanes*: but they knew not what Spirit they were of, as Christ told them; they never considered upon what ground they desired such a thing, whether it were Christ mind or not, that it should be so. And as *Augustine*, quoted by Mr. *Stillington* in his aforesaid Book, p. 61. 62. complained of men in his dayes about Ceremonies, who contended highly, yet had no ground for it but this, (as his words are) *because it had been the custom of their Country, or because they have found them in another Church, &c.* they think that nothing is right and Lawful, but what they do themselves. And as Bishop *Jewel* in his Reply before cited, said of many Hereticks, That they had nothing to plead, but that they were born, lived in, and received of their Fathers what they did practise:

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upon some such poor grounds as these doth the ignorance of men work, thus to abuse their brethren. And that it may so appear. Let such persons be perswaded to weigh the premises well in the fear of God, and take these conclusions with him. First, that such who continue in the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ (and thus hold Union with the Head of the Church according to *John 15. 4, 5.*) continue in and do not separate from the Catholick Church the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, the first Church in this discourse described; for there is no other Union between the members of this Church (as such) but this, their being by one Faith united to one Head; and from thence animated by one Spirit; and such who so continue, cannot be called Schismatics in this Church. To this Doctor *Carleton* agrees in his aforesaid Book p. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. &c. 2dly. That such who continue to make a profession of the Faith of our Lord Jesus, and do not openly deny him in their works, do still abide in the visible body of Jesus Christ, The Church 2dly above described, and cannot be said to separate from this Church, or be guilty of Schisme here; for this profession is the only thing wherein the unity of the whole visible Church lyeth. And thus Mr. *Stillingfleet* in his Book called a *Rational Account* &c. p. 331. saith, *That there is no separation from the whole Church, but in such things wherein the unity of the whole lyeth: For separation, saith he, is a violation of some union.* 3dly. That such who continue to walk in, and with any visible Company, Congregation or particular Church on earth, holding the true faith, in the orderly participation of Ordinances in man- as the Scripture directs, and in subjection to Christs Lawes given to be executed therein, as such a Church, the Church 3dly above described; he cannot be said to separate from, or be guilty of schisme in this Church.

Now then if these offended ones will justifie their charge against such who do not in Church affaires, as they do; It is necessary they prove such whom they thus accuse, guilty ei-

ther of infidelity absolute, or of their denying their profession of Jesus Christ, or of withdrawing from the Congregation or Society to which they were regularly joyned, without just cause, & refusing to walk in such a Church of Christ in the orderly participation of ordinances and to submit to the laws of Christ exercised therein. Or they must find a fourth Church described in Scripture, or in the Apostles dayes; and shew such a one now, from which a man may be said in a proper sence to separate; & also prove what act it is, that makes a separation from that Church; And that these persons are guilty of separation thence by such an Act, or else they cannot rationally conclude any of these to be separatists, or scismaticks, in any sence at all: If they can do neither of these, they will see cause to be angry no longer.

But it is possible they may alledge against some of these, that they have separated from the particular Congregations whereto sometimes they were joyned; therefore are they seperatists: For Answ. first, Then it must be proved, that they were regularly joyned to that Congregation; that is, by a voluntary Act of theirs in understanding which is proved by some expresse desire, in him that joynes; and an actual admission by the Society to which he is joyned: For a man may ignorantly sit down at a Sacrament in these Churches, where no order is observed, to prevent that confusion, as in Most Parish Churches; yet this makes not a regular joyning, nor him a fixed member of that Church or Society; a heathen may do this; besides, this is not consistng with the nature of a regular Society of rationall men, much less of Christians, where must be a consideration or compact between all the parties obliged; yea further, if a man be made of such a parish by the law of the land, and bound by the Law, joyn with the same Parish as a Church, and be one of the members thereof; This cannot be a regular joyning him to this Church neither, without his own voluntary Act: For by the Law of Nature, and the law of God, men are left free to  
joyn



joyn themselves to what Congregation or Society they pleased; And it is against both these, yea against the very nature and well being of such Societies, to force men to be of this or that Society against their own minds, and without the free consent of the Society it self: yet this was the case of most (we presume) who withdrew from parish Churches and Societies; either they did never by any act desire a regular admittance, or did the Society ever in truth make any Actuall admision; only sate down at a Sacrament, or they were made of the Society by a Law, neither of which can be made out to be such a regular joyning to that Society, as to d. nominate any such person to be a Schismatick or Seperatist for leaving them and joyning himself to any other. Besides should we grant that they were regularly joyned, and so actuall members of this or that Church, yet if they remove to another Church (if the Church of *England* be but true to their own Principles, and own their common practises, as regular) the guilt of separation cannot lye in this neither: for they allow a man to leave one parish and go to another, for conveniency of Habitation, Ayre, Trade, &c. Bodily advantages, and then joyn with the other Parish Church, as a member there, and leave the first: yea and that without acquainting the first Church, (whereof he was a Member) with his intentions, and for this he shall be no Separatist: so that from this it's clear, that separation lyes not barely in this; that men leave one Congregation or Society and joyn themselves to another. And wee think it may easily be granted, that if outward concerns be enough to acquit a man from the guilt of separation on such an account, and warrant his remove from one Church to another; much more may Soul concernment, justify a leaving of one Church and adjoyning to another. Yet  
further

*Amos 3. 3 How can two walk together except they be agreed.*

*See Mr. Vines upon the Sacrament. p. 266. he saith, as we may remove for health &c. so for more fruitful Ordinances.*



further we hope none will deny, but that there may be just cause for withdrawing from some Societies; and whether this might not fall in for a sufficient plea for many to clear themselves by, from any crime upon the account of withdrawing from the Society where once they were, and joyn-  
ing to another: Mr. *Stillingfleet* in his said *Irenicum*, p. 117. 118. 120. agrees thus much; *That where any Churches retaining purity of doctrine, do require the owning of, and conforming to, any unlawful or suspected practice, men may lawfully deny conformity to and communion with that Church in such things, without incurring the guilt of Scisme, and gives this reason for it:*

*Hales of Schisme*  
P. 8.

*If our separation from the Church of Rome, was therefore lawfull because she required unlawfull things, as Conditions of her Communion. Then wherever such things are required by any Church, Non-communion with that Church in those things will be lawfull too; And where saith he, Non-communion is lawfull, there can be no Schisme in it.*

*Mr. Raynolds conference with Hart*  
p. 666. 667.

*If that justified our withdrawing from the Church of Rome, will it not (saith he) justify mens Non-conformity in things supposed by them to be unlawfull. And again, our best Writers against the Papists lay the imputation of Schisme not upon these who withdraw Communion, but upon those who require such things, whereby they did rather eject men out of their Communion, than the others separate from them: And he quotes Mr. Hales of Schisme, to prove fully, The refusal of Communion (in case any unnecessary things, suspected by some, and held unlawfull by others, be made Conditions of Communion) to be Lawfull, and Duty, &c. Now it may be this might be the case of every one who hath withdrawn Communion from parishes; that many things are required there, without a Conformity to which, no communion can be had with them; That these required things are, (in the judgment of those who thus withdraw) unnecessary*

useless, unlawfull or suspected at least: And then this will, upon the same grounds, acquit every such one ( who have withdrawn ) from the Charge of Scisme. And though Mr. *Stillingfleet* seems a little ( in the 117. p. of the said Book ) to mince it in these words. *I say not that men may proceed to erecting of new Churches.* Yet he in his Book called a Rational Account &c. p 332. seems to own such a thing, when he pleads against Rome, and justifies Protestants separations These are his words; *Suppose all the particular men I converse with were Leprous, my associating my self with them, doth not imply any separation from the Communion of all mankind, but that I am loth to be infected as they are; Therefore I withdraw till I can meet with healthfull persons, with whom I can associate again; And if several other persons (saith he) be of the same mind with me, and we therefore joyn together, do we therefore divide our selves from the whole world?* Thus he in this place clearly intimated a withdrawing from one Society upon good grounds; and then for as many as be so withdrawn, and of the same mind, to joyn themselves together and associate by agreement, and that is no separation. And no doubt, but that there is matter enough to be found, sufficiently to warrant such persons in this also as well as in withdrawing Communion.

But if yet they shall say the Church of *England* is that from which these separate. How, pray? If the Church of *England* be granted to be a Church in either, or both of the two first Descriptions herein before given ( though, in Truth she be but a little part of both ) yet there is no other Union with her as one Church, nor can there be; but the Union in Faith under one Head, Jesus Christ, and participation of the same Spirit, and the profession of this Faith: So that none can be said to separate from her as a Church, or be guilty of Schism. or breach of Union here, but such who renounce the Faith and their Union with Christ the Head in Word or Deed, and forsake their profession of it. And this Church of *England* cannot be pretended to be a particular

particular Church under the third Description; for they never yet associated as such; nor is it possible for them as a Church to meet in one intire body in one place to partake of the same Ordinances, or do any other Act, as a Church or Society, but always met in their severall Bodies or Churches, for performing of all Acts of a Church as such. In like manner also, do these who are so blamed. Therefore in this sence neither, can they be (by any Rule of Reason) said to be guilty of Schism.

If these Offended ones shall yet say thus. That such Men refuse to joyn with our Congregations and Ministers in our way: For Answer to this (besides what hath been said before to justifie their continuing by themselves;) First, it's thought in Charity to be presumed, That these Men are convinced of the Truth of the premises; That in truth, all things about Church-Affairs were managed in and by particular Churches, Congregations, or Societies by Divine Authority, and so Ordered as before: Their Ministers chosen, the Matter of their Worship without any addition, alteration, or diminishing according to Divine Rules; Scandalous Persons cast out, &c. That these cannot judge it Lawful for them to do any thing in these matters, contrary, or not according to this Rule; but think, if they should, they must sin against God. And then this must needs be a sufficient plea for these, in this case; especially since other things (to them doubtful, unnecessary, and sinful) are made necessary Conditions of Communion with those Congregations: So that none can communicate with them, but of necessity he must submit to, own, and joyn with these things, and neglect the other way. Secondly, Is any man bound to joyn with, or partake in every Congregation in *England*, or in more than one? or must he be guilty of the breach of Union? Surely no; may not a Man abide in his own Parish all his Life, and refuse to have any Minister but his own, or Communicate with any Congregation, but that  
whereof

whereof he is a Member? Yet he shall not for this be accounted a Schismatick, or Separatist: It is presumed, no Man will say, he shall. Wherein then lyes the difference? These men thus accused do joyn themselves to some one Congregation or Church of God, according to the Rules, as was in the beginning, and there they abide in the Orderly participation of Ordinances and Subjection to Christs Laws therein executed, and disagree in nothing of the true Faith from other Churches. So that it follows, That barely upon this pretence neither, can they fasten the Crime of Separation upon those, who do not joyn with their Congregations and Ministers. May not members of Parish-Churches be as properly said to be Separatists for refusing to joyn themselves to those Congregations, Societies, or Churches and Ministers in their Worshipping of God, as these for not joyning with them? Nor can it be said, That these disagree with the Church of *England* in any thing wherein the whole Church of God is agreed, or the whole Church of *England*; but only in some things wherein the Church of God, yea, in *England*, disagree amongst themselves; as Mr. *Stillingsfleet*, in his said Book, called, *A Rational Account*, p. 357, 358. affirms against the Papists, in these words: *We, saith he, have not separated from the whole Christian World, in any thing wherein the whole Christian World is agreed: But to disagree from the particular Churches of the Christian World in those things wherein those Churches differ amongst themselves, is not to separate from the Christian World, but to disagree in some things from these particular Churches.* The case is here the same: These do not separate from the whole Church of *England*, but only disagree in those things wherein the particular Churches differ amongst themselves. And then walk with such who can and will agree with them in these things. If they say the Parish-Churches are most Lawful and right, and so their Ministers, Ministration, and Order. Let this be first decided by Gods Word,



Word, and their Lawfulness better proved, than the Churches Ministry and Order, and Management of Church-Affairs, amongst these; and before set forth as the Primitive Practice; and then they say something.

But if they justify all by the Law of the Land only, it may soon be answered by this, That it was not so from the beginning. That the other way is proved by the Law of God, and Practice of the Primitive Churches, and approbation of Learned and good Men in all Ages; yea, and of Men of contrary Practices themselves: Therefore surely the best plea against this. For if Magistrates or Governors appoint any thing in these matters not agreeable to these Rules, so that Men cannot be satisfied in their own minds, but doubt it's Lawfulness; such doubting ones may not be in the practice of it, (till they be satisfied of it's Lawfulness) without sin: Nor will it be a sufficient Excuse in the great Day of the Lord, if they thus sin, To say, that the Magistrate commanded me to do it.

If they shall yet further alledge, That these Persons agree not to, Walk not in those Practices and Rules in the Church of *England*, which are prescribed by the same Church, and to which the generality of the same Church agree, and submit; and therefore they may be said to be Separatists and Schismatics.

Though a full Answer to this may be gathered from the Answer to the last Objection, And what hath been said in this before to acquit them from this Charge upon such an Account. That is, that the Church of *England* (as such) never prescribed any such Rules, because they never met in the whole, or in their Representative, to consult about, or agree upon any such Rules, for the whole. Nor can any who have made such Rules, pretend themselves upon any Divine, or Rational grounds to be the Church of *England*, and intrusted from above with any such Power to make such Rules for the Churches Practice; nor are Men bound to use



use any thing in Gods Worship, or about it, not commanded by God himself, so long as they suspect such things in themselves, or as they are circumstanciated, to be unlawful; of which, every Man must be his own Judge for his own Practice, because it doth so highly concern him, as he would please God.

Yet we shall add this further by way of Answer. First, It is no true Rule; therefore to Practise those things which the generality of a Nation do, barely because they do so: For, we think, few will deny, that the most go the broad way, the wrong way, love not, follow not Christs Laws and Rules. Secondly, That the generality of the Church of *England*; in truth do not agree to those Rules and Practices in the Church; but would rather be glad that they were altered and Reformed, if the Magistrate would please to permit it; which we will make out thus: First, it may be taken for granted, we judge, That the greater number of People are not so studious, as to inform themselves of the true way of Ordering of Church-Affairs and making of Ministers; but take all upon trust, in these matters with the greatest implicit faith that can be; what ever their Governors do in these Cases, they subscribe to and practise; do herein as others do, or as they are enjoined to do, or as their Worldly Interest leads them. That there are others, who come not near any Churches or Worship at all, who care for none of these things, are practical Atheists, and of these not a few. Some again, and that a considerable Number too, who are profess'dly against all our ways; as Papists, and others, who pretend to be above all Ordinances and External Rules in these Matters. So, that when all these are set apart (as being not fit to give Sentence in the matter, nor their practice of any consideration in this case.) The number of Knowing, Serious, Consciencious, and Judicious Christians (whose Sentence only is worthy regard in this business) in the Church of *England*, will be but few.

few. Secondly, Of these few, the Major part consent not in heart at least, it is not their Judgment, that those prescribed Rules in the Church of *Englana*, are so Decent, Lawful, Useful to Edification, or tend to Peace, as is pretended, as many (though they Actually submit to them) have openly declared. And there are (no doubt) many more, (might they speak freely, and not be Offenders) would testify this. A considerable number also of these demonstrate their dissent by their Sufferings for their Non-conformity to them, and practising after another Rule in these things. If then the Major part of the Knowing, Sober, Judicious, and Consciencious Christians in *England* dissent, How can they say, The Church of *England* prescribes, or Commands this or that? Or have agreed on, or determined of this or that? Or that the generality of the Church agree to this, or that, (for an Agreement must be a judicious Act of the mind) to say, That the Rabble of Ignorant, Careless, and notoriously scandalous Persons agree to it, love it, embrace it, and contend highly for it; will help little to commend the Judgment of the Church, or make her Laws valid. And if this be so, Then, Thirdly, In what sence, or by what Rule of Reason can one part of the Christians in *England* rather be called Schismaticks, and Separatists for not agreeing with the other in these things, than the other part for not agreeing with the first (except, at least it be in things apparently and undoubtedly Lawful, and tending to Edification, and so accounted by all, that Offence cannot be given.) It can be no way resolved, but thus; That those who are uppermost in outward Power, whether one party or other, will have it so.

We shall therefore end with the words of *Tertul.* in his *Apol. Chap. 39. p. 142, 143.* English Translation: *We Offend no body, we Injure no body: When any Vertuous or Godly People are associated, when any Pious or Chast Persons Assemble together, their Union should not be called a Faction, but a Lawful Society.*

FINIS.

